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ABSTRACT

This cultural heritage resource guide has been prepared as a tool for teachers to help them understand the cultural heritage of their Haitian students, their families, and their communities in order to serve them better. Although Haiti became an independent country in 1804, the struggle of its people for justice and freedom has never ended. Many Haitians have left Haiti for political, social, and economic reasons, and many have come to the larger cities of the United States, particularly New York City. This guide contains the following sections: (1) "Introduction"; (2) "Haiti at a Glance"; (3) "In Search of a Better Life"; (4) "Haitian History"; (5) "Haitian Culture"; (6) "Images of Haiti"; and (7) "Bibliography," a 23-item list of works for further reading. (SLD)

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HAITIANS: A PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

HAITIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE GUIDE

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A PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

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PREFACE

The Haitian youngsters who attend New York City's public schools bring with them a rich cultural heritage. As educators, we have a responsibility to all the young people in our schools to understand them and their communities, and to build on the knowledge and experience they bring.

This teacher's cultural heritage resource guide has been prepared as a tool which we hope will be used to promote a better understanding of our Haitian students, their families, and their communities in order to serve them better. The guide is part of our effort to offer all youngsters an education of high quality and equity that builds on what they bring to school.

Lillian Hernández, Ed.D.
Executive Director

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Haitians: A People on the Move, is a publication of the Division of Bilingual Education, Lillian Hernández, Ed.D., Executive Director.

The overall preparation of the guide was under the supervision of Noemí Carrera Herendeen, Director, Office of Bilingual Curriculum and Instructional Services.

A group of educators lent their expertise to make this publication possible. They researched and wrote the first draft of the material contained herein: Marie José Bernard, Christine Damas, Ménès Déjoie, Joubert Duval, Micheline Duval, Marie Pouché, Marie José Marcellus, and Cauvin Paul. They deserve our deepest appreciation.

The editing and translation of the guide into English was done by Yves Raymond with the collaboration of Ménès Déjoie. They worked tirelessly and gave of their own time so that this guide could be in teachers' hands. We thank them for their strong commitment.

Anthony J. Armada also offered his support by reading the English version of the guide and giving valuable comments and recommendations to improve it. We appreciate his support all along the way.

Ana Soto and Peter Wadsworth did the artwork contained in the guide. We thank them for adding their talent to our work.

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INTRODUCTION

When Haiti was known as *Saint-Domingue*, the slaves fought relentlessly until they won their freedom. Boukman, Toussaint, Dessalines, Pétion, Christophe and all the slaves rose up against slavery. On January 1, 1804, *Saint-Domingue* became Haiti, a free and independent country. But the struggle of the Haitian people for justice and freedom had just begun. Up until today, the Haitian people continue to fight with the same intensity and determination as their ancestors. They are on the move inside the country, demanding their rights through protests and demonstrations whenever necessary. Sometimes, repression, economic hardship, and injustice force them to flee the country, to become maroons like their ancestors. But it is a new form of escape, one that involves boats, plane, and foreign countries.

Many Haitians are leaving.
From all four corners of the country,
There are Haitians leaving.
They leave for Nassau.
They leave for the Dominican Republic.
They leave for Canada.
They leave for the United States.
Some of them leave by plane.
Some of them take to the sea.
One by one Haitians are leaving the country.
Life has become so expensive
Injustice and poverty are so rampant
All the poor people have to leave.

But the tide is changing, and a brighter future lies ahead

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HAITI AT A GLANCE

Haiti occupies the western third and the Dominican Republic the eastern two-thirds of the island of Hispaniola. The border between these two countries can be crossed on foot.

Before 1804, Haiti was a French colony named *Saint-Domingue*. Haitians are descendants of Africans who were the slaves of French colonists during colonial times. After the victory of the slaves over the French army, Haiti became the first black republic in the world.

According to the 1990 census, there were five and a half million people living in Haiti. At the time the results of this census were made public, many people did not believe that the figures were accurate. They thought there were more people living in Haiti. Nonetheless, Haiti's population is increasing rapidly. Some people claim there are seven million people living in Haiti. Two-thirds of the population lives in the countryside. Farming is its primary occupation. In spite of that, agriculture accounts for only 35 percent of the country's Gross National Product (GNP). The service sector employs 23 percent of the workforce, yet it accounts for 42 percent of Haiti's GNP. As for the industrial sector, it employs six percent of the population, and represents 23 percent of the GNP. Haiti's elite, while small in numbers, controls 60 percent of its resources. It is estimated that 40 to 70 percent of the work force is unemployed.

Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, has a population of more than a million people. Haiti's other major cities are *Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, Les Cayes*, and *Jacmel*. Since 1987, the year a new constitution was voted in, Haiti has two official languages: French and Haitian Creole. In reality, there is only one language in which all Haitians are proficient: Haitian Creole.

Haiti means "mountainous country" in the language spoken by its first inhabitants at the time Christopher Columbus arrived there in 1492. The name is appropriate because three-quarters of the country is made up of mountains. There are five mountain ranges that divide the country into several regions. *La Selle* is the tallest peak, reaching 2,680 meters in height. *Massif de la Hotte* in the Macaya peak comes in second with an elevation of 2,347 meters. Deforestation causes the loss of much of the country's arable land every time it rains. As a result, Haiti is close to becoming a desert. Only two percent of the country is covered with trees. This situation has resulted in the extinction of many wild animals. Agricultural production has seen a dramatic decrease because of land erosion.

Haiti has a tropical climate. The year is divided into two rainy seasons (from April to June and from August to November) and two dry seasons (from November to March and from July to September). The yearly rainfall is about 70 inches, but not every part of the country gets the same amount of rain. Rainfall is more abundant in the southern peninsula and some northern mountains. The western coast gets very little rain.

Haiti is in the path of hurricanes. It has already suffered the wrath of some major hurricanes such as Andrew, Hazel (1954), Flora (1963), Cleo (1964), Ines (1966), and David (1979.)

The country of Haiti has also been shaken by two major earthquakes that destroyed two main cities. One occurred on June 3, 1770 and ravaged *Port-au-Prince*; the one that occurred on May 7, 1842 devastated *Cap-Haïtien*.

Haiti is a so-called agricultural country. However, agricultural production has been on the decline since 1950. Haiti used to produce agricultural goods for exportation and food for local consumption. These days the agricultural production can hardly feed the people of the country. Many abandon their land and go to the cities. As a result, many merchants are beginning to import rice, flour, sugar, and other products.

Most of Haiti's land is owned by the state which leases out a good portion of it for the cultivation of cotton and sisal. Only about one-third of the country's land is suitable for cultivation and, to make matters worse, it is not well irrigated. Haitian peasants do not use sophisticated tools, are not well versed in modern methods of production, and do not have the means to take proper care of the land.

Mining is not very prevalent in Haiti. In 1957, a company by the name of Reynolds opened in *Miragoâne* for the mining of bauxite, but it closed down in 1983. Sedren, another company, had a contract with the government to mine copper in *Terre Neuve*, near *Gonaïves*, for 25 years. It only stayed for 17 years. According to some experts, there are three lignite mines in Haiti, one in Plateau Central, near *Maïssade*, and two in the southern peninsula. Other studies would indicate that there is manganese present near *Jacmel* and in *Jérémie*, iron in the north, and marble in *Camp-Perrin*. Other raw materials found in Haiti, e.g. sand, clay, etc. are useful for building houses. It is believed by some that there is crude oil in the Gulf of *La Gonâve*, but not too many people think it is true.

The industrial sector is quite weak in Haiti. The number of people working in this area has not really increased since 1968. This sector made some advances in the 1970s, when factories began burgeoning in Port-au-Prince. The goods produced by this segment of the economy are used both for local consumption and for exportation.

Haitian parents place a high value on education. They make tremendous sacrifices to send their children to school because they believe that only a good education can improve the lot of the family. According to them, education is the guarantee for a better tomorrow. To them it is the key that opens the door to high society and which leads to economic empowerment. Some children go to school hungry, others walk for hours to get to school. Some high school students spend the whole day standing because there are not enough seats in the classrooms.

The constitution of 1805 was the first to declare that education was free for all and that primary schooling was mandatory. In 1848, the Haitian government created rural schools. The curriculum of these schools was heavily based on agriculture.

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In 1860, Haiti signed a concordat with the Vatican which resulted in the Catholic church playing a major role in Haitian education. Various congregations opened new schools in the country. This is how religious schools took root in Haiti.

The Haitian system of education has tended to copy the French model. In the past, Haitian high school students, like their French counterparts, studied Greek, Latin, and French. Minister Dantès Bellegarde changed that situation in 1918. He opened a school of public works and a vocational school. At the end of the 1970s, minister Bernard launched a major reform in the Haitian educational system. Both rural and city primary schools came under the control of the National Board of Education. A 4-3-3 system was established corresponding to 10 years of basic education. Haitian Creole also became an official language of instruction in 1979.

HAITIAN IMMIGRATION

Historians have reported migration from Hispaniola[1] to North America as early as 1526. In the 1600's the French settled on part of the island and called it *Saint-Domingue*. Spain agreed to let the French claim about one-third of the island. In 1779, a troop of 800 men from *Saint-Domingue* joined the American colonies in their struggle for independence and fought against the British at the battle of Savannah, in Georgia.

The first large population movement from "Haiti" to North America occurred during the Haitian Revolution and continued for five more years after the war. Between 1791 and 1809, an estimated 10,000 Saint-Dominguans/Haitians left the island to come to live in North America.

Refugees from the Haitian War of Independence included mulattoes[2], French colonists, and the slaves they brought with them from "Haiti". These immigrants settled primarily in Chicago, New York, New Orleans, Norfolk, Philadelphia, Charleston, and Boston. They played a key role in the development of the South. They operated French newspapers, introduced French comedy, opera and drama to Louisiana, and founded Catholic schools. Some of them became lawyers, entrepreneurs, physicians, politicians.

In 1808, the population of African descent greatly increased in New Orleans with the immigration of approximately 4,000 Haitian mulattoes and former slaves, since slavery was no longer legal in Haiti.

---

[1] The island that includes Haiti and the Dominican Republic was called Hispaniola by Columbus when he landed there.

[2] Name given to people of mixed European and African descent. The Negro Code of 1685 granted the mulattoes equal rights with the whites. But, in reality they faced many restrictions.

The second significant wave of Haitian immigration to the shores of the United States occurred during the American occupation of Haiti between 1915 and 1934. Refugees from the American occupation settled mainly in New York. They participated in political and cultural activities with the Harlem Renaissance and Marcus Garvey's Back-to-Africa movement. Some of them held major positions in the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Jacques Roumain, a well-known Haitian poet and novelist, became one of the most outspoken communists of the 1930s in Harlem. The Haitian refugees tried to promote Haitian goods in New York by forming associations such as *Utilités d'Haiti* and importing honey, rum and coffee from their native land. Most of them were highly educated and adjusted well to life in New York.

The next substantial influx of Haitian refugees came with the ascent of the Duvaliers to power. From 1959 to 1972, approximately 80,000 Haitian immigrants were legally admitted to the United States. The number of undocumented Haitian immigrants who came during that period and overstayed their visas is unknown.

As a result of the recent political upheaval in Haiti, over 50,000 Haitians have attempted to enter the United States. Most have not been successful.

New York is the state that seems to attract the largest number of Haitian immigrants. Florida comes next. There are smaller populations of Haitian immigrants in states such as Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania.

THE BOAT PEOPLE

The Haitian "Boat People" phenomenon started on September 15, 1963 when the first boat from Haiti arrived at West Palm Beach from the Bahamas with 12 passengers on board. They all claimed political asylum; it was not granted. Since that year, thousands and thousands of Haitians have attempted to reach American soil by boat. For example, on December 13, 1972, 65 Haitians arrived at Pompano Beach after a three-week journey aboard a leaking 56-foot sailboat. Many of these boat people suffered intense hardship and danger.

According to figures released by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), more than 50,000 Haitians arrived in the United States by boat between 1972-1981. At first the United States government granted these refugees parole (permission to stay in the United States until their cases were decided). However, most of the claims for permanent residence were denied. The Haitians were declared economic, not political refugees.

In contrast, it was much easier for immigrants from Cuba to be granted permanent residence. Since they were fleeing a communist government, most of them were accepted as political, not economic refugees. Once they were given political asylum, they were also granted permanent residence status.

In 1981, the Coast Guard was authorized to interdict vessels carrying Haitians at sea before they reached American shores. President Reagan explained that such measures were necessary because the uncontrolled flow of refugees posed a "serious problem detrimental to the interests of the United States."

As the number of Haitians seeking residence in the U.S. continued to increase, the American government designed new ways of dealing with the problem: faster deportations, more detentions and interdiction (stopping boatloads of refugees at sea). Haitians were detained on U.S. Coast Guard cutters in navy bases and at a detention camp in Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. Haitians awaiting decisions on their cases were incarcerated in West Virginia, Puerto Rico, Texas, Kentucky, New York, and Florida.

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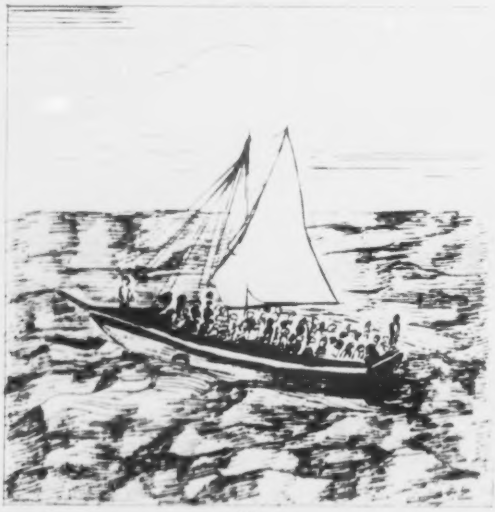
The May 24, 1992 Executive Order required the Coast Guard not only to interdict Haitian vessels, but to forcibly repatriate Haitians to their homeland. None of the 4,000 Haitians processed during this accelerated program were granted permanent resident status. The United States also put an end to its policy of granting parole to Haitian refugees. Instead, the Immigration and Naturalization Service instituted a detention program.

According to the government, the great majority of Haitians were not political refugees. The United States' definition of a political refugee stated that a political refugee is an alien who flees his/her country due to fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality or membership in a particular social or political group.

The U.S. government considered most Haitians to be "economic migrants" who were fleeing poverty rather than persecution. The administration stated that the interdiction and forced repatriation program was instituted out of concern for the safety of the Haitian boat people and a desire to discourage them from attempting the perilous ocean journey to American soil.

The United States' immigration policy toward Haitians was challenged and criticized by many organizations and human rights activists. Over the years, there have been various court cases, picket lines, massive demonstrations, hunger strikes and petitions to force the United States to reverse its restrictive immigration policy toward Haitians. Part of the argument was the difference in the treatment of Haitians and that of refugees from other countries.



BOAT PEOPLE[1]

We are all in a sinking vessel
It happened before in Saint-Domingue
Yet we are the only ones they call boat people

We've all been dead for a long time
There's nothing left that can scare us
Let them call us boat people

We've been fighting with poverty forever
On islands in every sea
It's others who call us boat people

Agawou[2] says no matter how long the night
Daybreak shall come
We never say that we are not boat people

In Guinea, the unleashed dogs to capture us
We were chained and shipped across the sea
Who else would call us boat people

Half the freight died at sea
The rest they sold in "Mache Kwa Bosal"[3]
It's others who call us boat people

The day we stomped our feet the earth trembled
All the way to Louisiana, to Venezuela
Who would have dared to call us boat people

Our country went through hard times
Hunger forced the dogs to eat cactus
They hadn't yet called us boat people

---

[1] Original version reprinted from *Dyakout 1,2,3,4* in Haitian Creole version of this guide. Translated by Yves Raymond. Permission pending.

[2] Voodoo god.

[3] Open air market where slaves were traded during colonial times.

We went looking for jobs and freedom
They stuffed us into a vessel bound straight for Miami
Others began calling us boat people

We were running away from 'Fò Dimanch'[4]
Only to end up on Krome Avenue
It's others who call us boat people

The heat of Miami puts us in a stupor
The cold of Chicago chills us to the bone
Boat people boat people boat people

And yet except for the Indians
Name one American who is not an immigrant
It's us they want to call boat people

We don't bring drugs with us
We bring our strength in order to work
Boat people that's right boat people

We don't come to cause trouble
We come with our self-respect
It's others who call us boat people

We're not going to raise our voice or scream
But all boat people are equal
All boat people are boat people

One day we'll rise up and stomp our feet
As we did in Saint-Domingue
They'll find out who the boat people really are

That day be it Christopher Columbus
Henry Kissinger they'll find out
Whom we call boat people.

Félix Morisseau-Leroy
Dyakout 1, 2, 3, 4; pages 136-138

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[4] Notorious Haitian prison.

EXILE[1]

Many leave, it's true
But how many never get there?
Some fall on hard times,
Some are thrown overboard.
Some fall by the roadside
To be swallowed up by the dust.
Some ask for directions
To be shown the way to hell.

In many places where we end up,
They don't give us the right to stay;
We go from house to house,
We go from ordeal to ordeal;
We sleep under bridges
In many wretched cities;
They make us say uncle
In every language known to humankind.

But our wandering
All over the roads of the earth
Has taught us the secret of life
And we finally discover
We are a race of people
We are a class of people
Who carry the earth on our backs
Who carry the whole world on our backs.

Piti Piti Plen Kay
Serge Madhère, 1987

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[1] Original version reprinted from *Piti Piti Plen Kay in H*aitian version of this guide. Translated by Yves Raymond. Permission pending.

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IN SEARCH OF A BETTER LIFE

When the peasant looks for work and cannot find it in his country, he often goes elsewhere. When somebody leaves his country to go to another, it is called emigration. Some peasants used to go to Cuba to cut sugar cane. They now go to the Dominican Republic, The Bahamas, Miami, New York.

Other peasants leave the countryside to look for work in the cities. This has resulted in shantytowns such as *La Saline* and *Fort National* in Port-au-Prince, *La Fossette* in Cap-Haïtien, and *Raboteau* in Gonaïves. These areas are teeming with country people who have come to live in the cities. They cannot find decent housing. They cannot find employment. They will take odd jobs in the cities in order to survive.

There are people who leave the country to look for work in the United States or Canada. The U.S. cities with the most Haitians are New York, Miami, Boston, and Chicago. There are many, many Haitians in New York. Some of them work as factory workers. Others work in restaurants, hotels, schools, and offices.

Taken from *Guide for Native Language and Content Area Literacy Programs for H.S. Haitian-Creole Speaking Students,* New York City Public Schools, 1992

HAITIANS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Haitians began going to the Dominican Republic to cut sugar cane in 1920. As a result, there are many Haitians living in the Dominican Republic today. The Haitian population there would even be greater had the Dominican army under Trujillo not massacred 20,000 Haitians in 1937. They were accused of taking jobs away from the Dominicans.

Each year, 15,000 Haitians reach *Malpasse* by truck. They cross *Jimani* to cut sugar cane for six months in the Dominican Republic. The sugar cane harvest begins in January, and it ends in June. From *Baraona* to *San Pedro de Macoris*, from *Haina* to *Puerto Plata*, we can say that Haitians are the primary cane cutters in the Dominican Republic. They are paid eight Haitian gourdes for every ton of sugar cane they cut. A hard working *bracero*[1] can cut about three tons a day. The workers live in wooden huts with no space between them. Some huts are even built up on top of others. Such crowded areas are called *bateys*. The *braceros* don't have access to running water, indoor plumbing, electricity or a kitchen. They don't have access to medical care or legal protection. The 'CEA'[2] store sells them food at an overpriced rate by contrast to the meager wages they are getting.

Haitian peasants began working as laborers in the Dominican Republic starting with the American occupation of Haiti (1915). During that time, many peasants lost their land; they were also forced to do *kòve*[3]. The Americans encouraged the Haitian peasants to leave because they wanted to get rid of many of them who belonged to the *Cacos*[4]. Two *Caco* leaders were Charlemagne Péralte and Benoit Batraville.

---

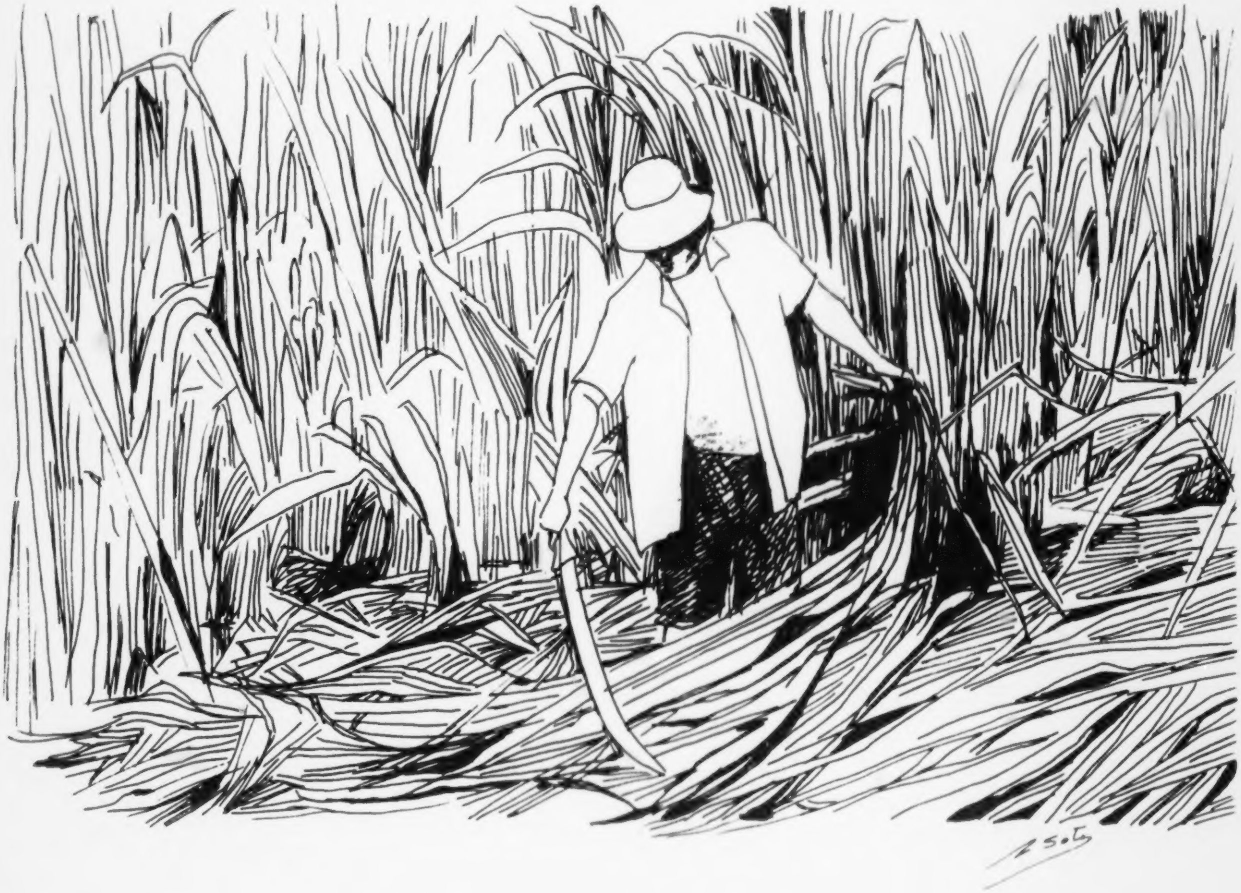
1. Spanish name for sugar cane cutter.

2. Acronym for the association dealing with the production of sugar.

3. Communal work imposed by the occupying forces.

4. Peasant army who fought against the American occupation of Haiti.

Not all Haitians living in the Dominican Republic are *braceros*. Some of them work in the production of other crops such as coffee, cotton, cacao, and tobacco. Others work as middlemen in the exportation of agricultural products. Another sector that is beginning to emerge involves people working in construction. Many Haitian women are beginning to work as household servants or as street vendors.



HAITIANS IN THE BAHAMAS

The Bahamas consists of a group of islands that are members of an association called "Commonwealth of Nations." England heads the association; but this group of islands has its own prime minister. It has been more than 25 years since Haitians began leaving their country to go to the Bahamas. When they get there, they work as gardeners, household servants, security guards and parking attendants. The Bahamian government has refused to recognize the rights of Haitian immigrants. They are often subjected to abuse and humiliation. In 1978, 23 Haitians drowned near Freeport.

When a child is born to Haitian parents in the Bahamas, the government does not recognize the child as Bahamian. He/she has to reach 18 years of age in order to be able to apply for Bahamian citizenship. In 1981 and in 1985, the Haitian government signed an agreement with the Bahamian government giving the latter the right to repatriate Haitians who were living there illegally. Even before the agreement went into effect, many Haitians were arrested, their possessions confiscated, and thrown in jail. There are more than 40,000 Haitians living in the Bahamas.

MY TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

(A story about immigration by Marie José Marcellus)

My grandmother always tells me that she has been the one taking care of me ever since I was two. My mother had gone to work in the Bahamas. It was not until I was ten that I got reacquainted with her. She had come for vacation. When she was going back to the Bahamas, she promised to send for me. That upset me because I loved my grandmother dearly. I was not going to be happy to leave her.

After a few years, my mother wrote me a letter to inform me that my papers were in order and to come live with her. I was so sad that day. I thought about all my friends, the places we used to go together, all the fun we had. Besides, I had heard that Haitians were not welcome in the Bahamas. That made me even sadder. However, I had to follow my mother's wishes. It was with a heavy heart that I took the plane to the Bahamas. It was 1977.

When I arrived in Freeport, it was hard for me to make the transition. I was not used to my mother. She had two other children who were born in the Bahamas. They spoke no Creole and I spoke no English. They were not very nice to me. They used to tease me in English; they used to ridicule me. Sometimes, I understood what they were saying, but I could not answer them back. When I took the chance and uttered a few words in English, they teased me even more.

It was not easy for me to get used to the schools. The students were very disruptive. They would bother me simply because I was Haitian. I should have been in the ninth grade but they put me in the third. In spite of that, I could not understand what was going on in class. I had a headache every morning. I missed so many days of school. One day, my mother told me: "It seems to me that you are not learning because you do not speak English. I am going to put you in a different school." She went and registered me in a Catholic school where the principal spoke French. That was a relief. I became a little more at ease, but the children were still bothering me because of the way I spoke. Even the teachers would tease me at times.

At the time I was in the Bahamas, Haitians had a very hard time there. They did not want them to work in hotels anymore. They claimed that people who were not citizens were not entitled to work. The majority of the Haitians I knew worked in hotels or else they had their own little businesses. The men worked as gardeners. Some people grew peanuts, sweet potatoes, okra, and pigeon peas. A number of Haitians would hide their nationality so they wouldn't be disrespected by the Bahamians. Because of my accent, it was hard for me to deny my country of origin. After a while, I began to do well in school. After school, I would help my mother run a little store she owned.

When I graduated in 1981, I could not get a scholarship to attend college even though I was the valedictorian of my class. My name appeared in a newspaper. That was the extent of the recognition I got. Then, my mother decided to send me to Miami, Florida. This is how I came to the United States.

HAITIAN HISTORY

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THE PRE-COLUMBIAN PERIOD

The Importance of History

History is a country's memory. It reminds us of the battles fought by a group of people in the past to build a society, a nation. Consequently, it is important for all citizens of a country to study history.

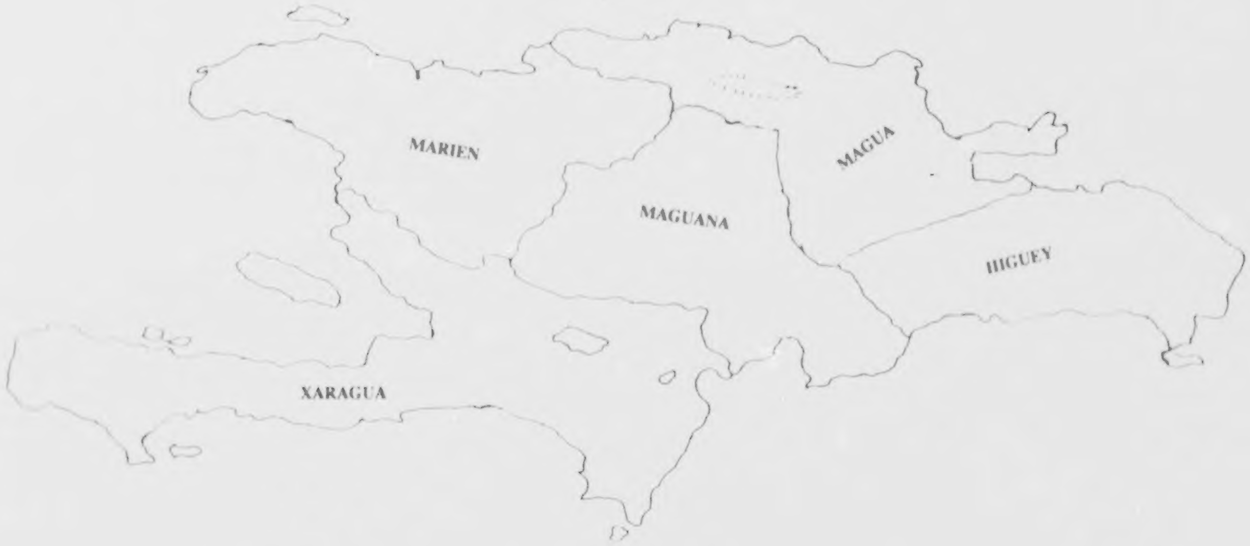
History allows us to see where we have been, where we are, and where we want to go. Let's take Haiti as an example. Today only history can open our eyes and our minds to the events that took place there and to the consequences of these events on the country's functioning.

The Pre-Columbian Period

Quisqueya

Before Christopher Columbus' arrival, Haiti was named *Quisqueya*. It was a country teeming with trees and birds. There are countless stories about flocks of birds flying in the woods. One of those stories recount how the sky darkened when these birds were flying; they were so numerous that they blocked the sun's rays. This was a very good time for the fauna and flora of *Quisqueya*. It was a good time for the people, too.

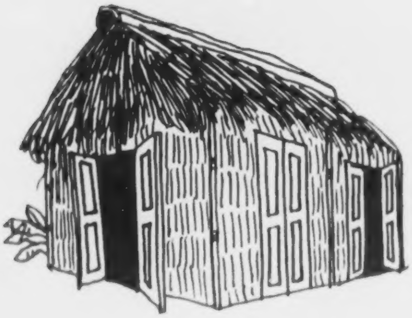
The Island of Haiti before 1492

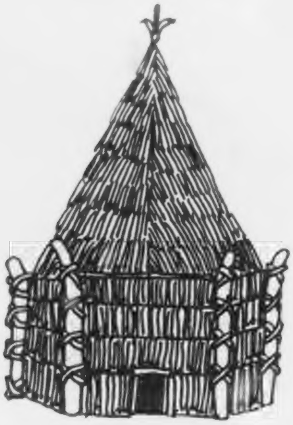

MARIEN
MAGUA
MAGUANA
HIGUEY
XARAGUA

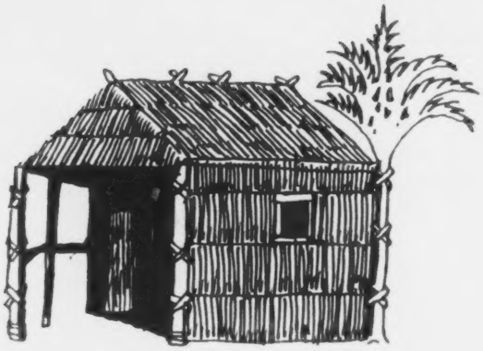
Caciquat

Quisqueya was divided into five geographical units. Each unit was called a *caciquat*. Thus, there were five *caciquats*. Each one had a name and a chief. The chiefs were called *caciques*.

Names of *Caciquats*	Names of *Caciques*
1. Magua	Guarionex
2. Marien	Guacanagaric
3. Xaragua	Bohéchio
4. Maguana	Caonabo
5. Higuey	Cotubanama

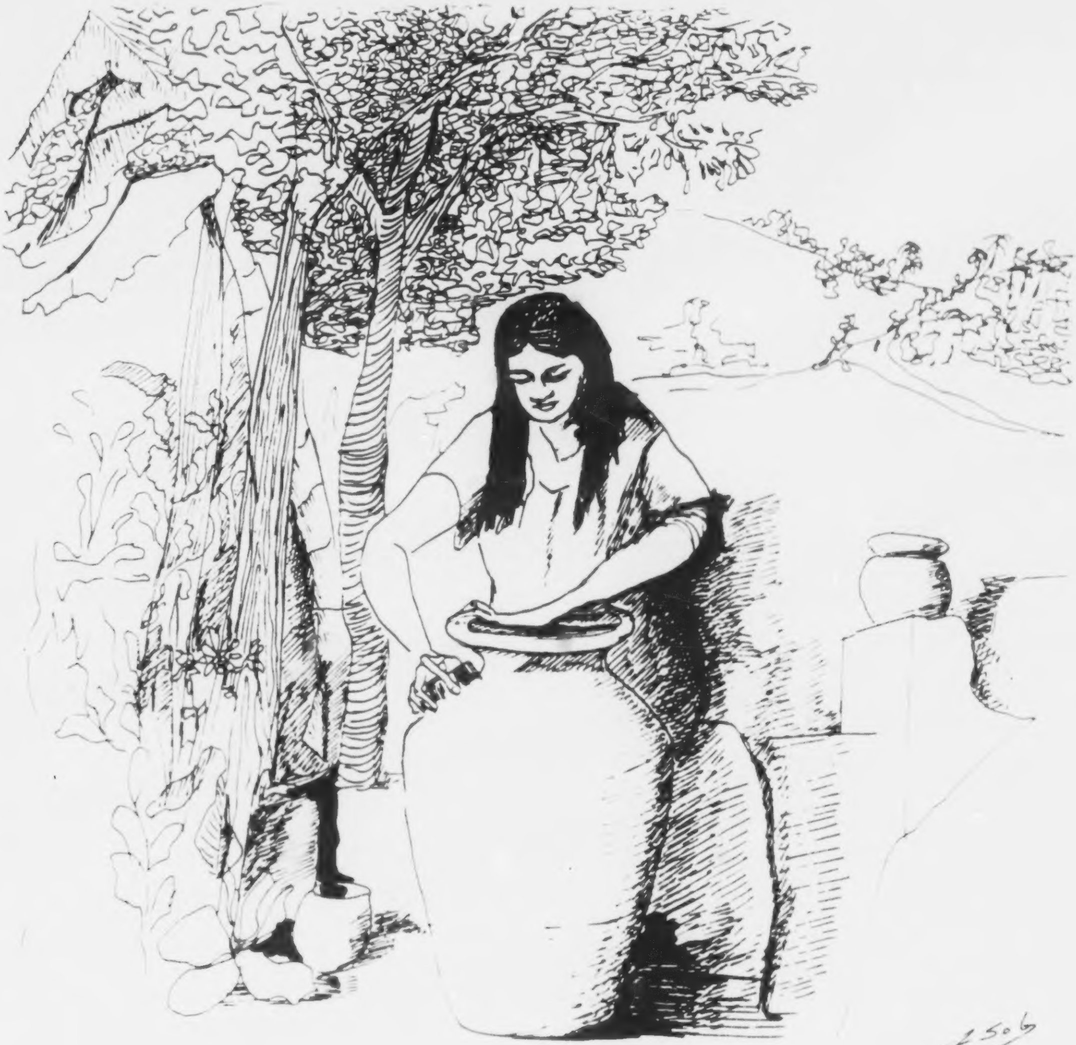






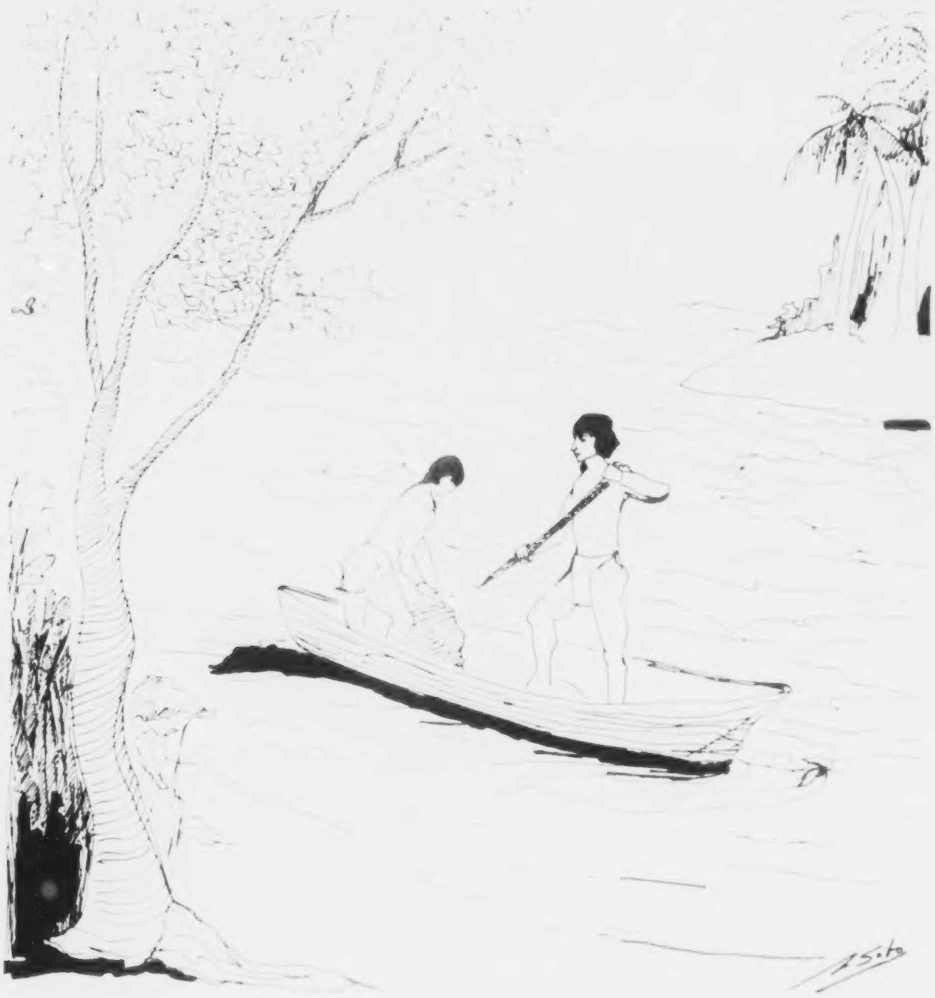
The Tainos

The indigenous population of *Quisqueya* were called *Tainos*. They were found in all five *caciquats*. They lived like one big family. They shared all their possessions. Each *caciquat* was organized as a society where everybody worked together, even the *caciques*. There were no masters, no slaves; there was no prejudice. Both men and women could become *caciques*. Two important Taino women were Anacaona, who held an important position in Xaragua, and Princess Iguanama, who was quite influential in *Higuey*.



The Economy

There are historians from bygone days who believed that the Tainos lived like wild animals, surviving primarily from the prey they could hunt or fish. While it is true that the Tainos loved to hunt and fish, that is not all they knew how to do. They made beautiful tools which they handled with tremendous dexterity. Today, beautiful, well-made Taino axes can be found in museums. They were used to cut wood and to plow the soil. The Quisqueyans knew how to farm. They grew cassava, corn, cotton, sweet potatoes, vegetables and plantains, primarily. Thus, they were not merely reduced to picking guavas and apricots to eat. They tried to establish a farming economy albeit on a small scale to satisfy everyone's needs.



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Language, Literature and Culture

The language spoken by the Tainos in Haiti has disappeared. One of the reasons for this disappearance is the fact that the Tainos did not write the language they spoke. They used it primarily for oral communication. Nonetheless, it was a language that possessed the sound of poetry and the cadence of music. This is evidenced by a few of the words that have survived, words such as *wowoli, woukou, banbou, kayimit, kowosòl*. These words came directly from the literature of the Tainos. We must remember that the Tainos had built a society with cultural elements that included poetry, storytelling, religion, holidays, ceremonies, etc. In Taino society, poets were called *sanba*, gods were named *zemès* and *bityòs* was the name reserved for herb doctors, priests or religious leaders. However, what made Taino literature most original was the power of words. This power could set people's bodies in motion. Young men and young ladies would decorate their bodies with feathers or red dye and they would start dancing and singing. It was a literature based on dances and songs. Taino culture was pretty much a big party where business and pleasure were inextricably tied, where the same hands that made the pitchers, the cups, or the plates would join together in a dance of friendship. This is the way it was before the Spaniards landed.

THE SPANISH PERIOD

Introduction

Since the night of December 5, 1492, when Christopher Columbus and his companions dropped anchor in the Bay of *Môle-Saint-Nicolas,* we can say that the Spanish reign had begun on the island of Quisqueya. That day was the feast of Saint Nicholas in the Catholic church's calendar. Christopher Columbus seized the occasion to baptize the port where he landed, *San Nicolás*. To this day, the name has remained *Môle-Saint-Nicolas*.

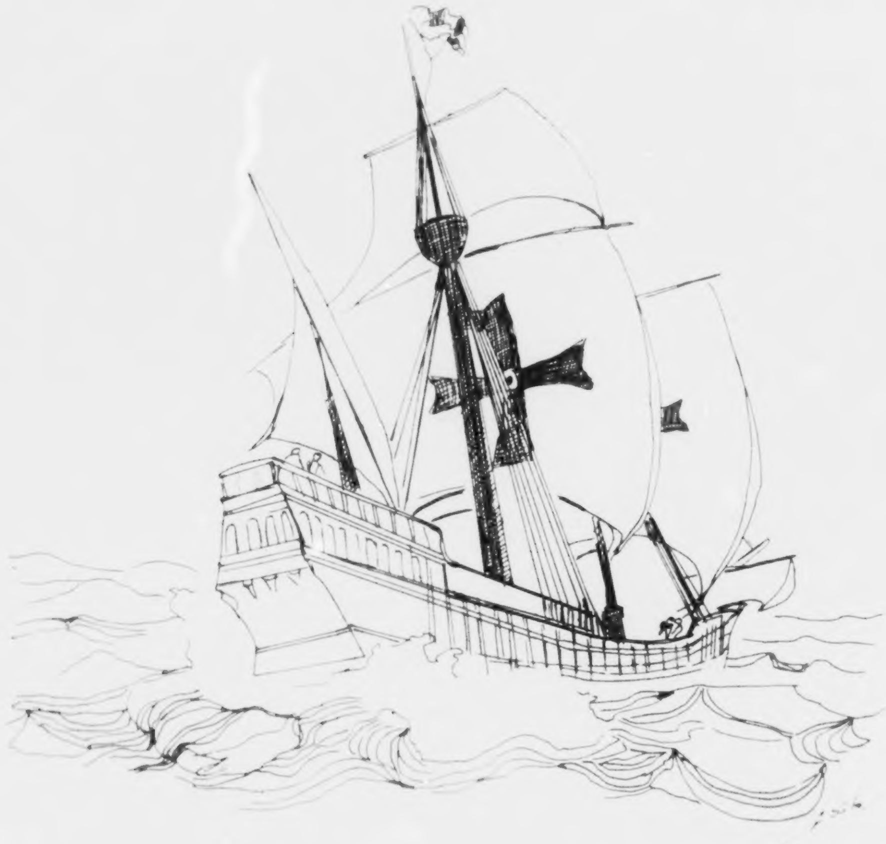
Christopher Columbus

Christopher Columbus was born in Genoa, Italy, in 1451. His family was not well-off and, as a result, he did not have much formal schooling. Nevertheless, Columbus always loved the sea. Ferdinand, Christopher Columbus' son, reported in a book written about his father that the widely-known explorer began traveling the sea since the age of fourteen. It was from his interest in the sea, from listening to other people speak of lands rich in gold, and to old captains recounting tales of their travels to Asia, Guinea and India, that Christopher Columbus began to dream about his own travels. He came to believe that there had to be land on the other side of the ocean and he wanted to explore this possibility. However, he had neither money nor ships for such an expedition.

Italy was not interested in his project. He went to look for help in England, France, and Portugal. They did not respond favorably to his request and thought he was crazy. Columbus did not get discouraged. He then went to Spain. There he found a sponsor, a priest by the name of Juan Perez de Machena. The latter approached King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella on Columbus' behalf. His efforts paid off. That's how Columbus' project began to take shape. The king and queen gave him two ships, and they promised to make him admiral and viceroy of all the lands he discovered. Two rich merchants from the City of Palos, known as the Pinzon brothers, gave Columbus a third ship. They had faith in Columbus' project. As a result, on August 3, 1492, the three ships, The *Niña*, the *Pinta* and the *Santa María*, set sail from the Port of Palos. The New World adventure had begun.

Christopher Columbus Arrives in Haiti

The first thing that struck Christopher Columbus and his crew when they landed in Haiti was the high level of verdure that covered the country. They were simply astonished. They felt that the country resembled Spain. Thus, they named it *Hispaniola*, which meant *Little Spain*. After the Spanish landed, Columbus planted a cross and raised a Spanish flag in the sand. From that day (December 6) on, the land of Quisqueya became the property of Spain, in alliance with the Catholic Church. The second thing that happened was a geographic miscalculation. In his quest to find new lands, Columbus thought he had arrived in India. That's why he named Quisqueya's inhabitants *Indians*. Soon after the landing, Haiti's name changed to *Hispaniola* and the Tainos became *Indians*.



The First Encounters between the Indians and the Spaniards

When the Indians first saw the Spaniards, they fled. They were taken aback by the newcomers' costumes and weapons. After their fear and apprehension subsided, they came back and greeted the Spaniards warmly.

Christopher Columbus and Cacique Guacanagaric

Guacanagaric came to greet Christopher Columbus on the beach. He thought Columbus was a god that fell from the heavens. He saw in the Spaniard an advocate, a man that would help him repel attacks on his territory (Le Marien) by the Carib Indians. They became very good friends. Columbus would invite Guacanagaric to dine with him, and the latter would reciprocate by offering gifts to the Spaniards. Their friendship grew stronger, especially when the Santa María, one of Columbus' vessels became shipwrecked.

Fort La Nativité

The Santa María became shipwrecked near Cap-Haïtien on Christmas Eve. The Indians in the area came to help.

When this misfortune befell the Spaniards, Guacanagaric, who considered Columbus like a brother, was saddened. He gave Columbus a piece of land on Le Marien's territory in order to console him. It was on this piece of land that *Fort La Nativité* was built.

The Indians Destroy La Nativité

Columbus was so happy about his "discovery" that he rushed back to Spain to tell King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella all the details of his exploits. However, before he left Hispaniola on January 11, 1493, he warned his companions. He told them to treat the Indians well and to be especially careful not to leave Guacanagaric's territory.

Columbus had not even reached Spain when the companions he left behind started to cause trouble. They invaded Guacanagaric's territory. They stole whatever they could from the Indians: food, goods, gold, etc. They even captured some of the Indian women. Guacanagaric, being Columbus' friend, overlooked these excesses. However, the Spaniards got into trouble when they set foot on Maguana, cacique Caonabo's territory. This caciquat was rich in gold.

The Spaniards wanted to plunder that territory, but they were driven off by the Indians.

The incident did not stop there. Caonabo was angry. He never approved of Guacanagaric's cozy relations with the Spaniards whom he always saw as a bunch of hoodlums bent on causing trouble. After the Maguana incident, he invaded *Le Marien* with his army in the middle of the night; he massacred many Spaniards in their sleep, and he burned *La Nativité* to the ground.

Toward the Enslavement of the Indians

Christopher Columbus returned to Haiti on November 22, 1493. Guacanagaric told him what happened. The destruction of *Fort La Nativité* gave Christopher Columbus the excuse he needed to establish a colony where the Spaniards could enslave the Indians and become their masters. He began a construction program. First, he drew up a plan for a city he would name after Queen Isabella. This policy of taking over Indian land and building on it did not sit well with Caonabo. He decided to take action.

Who was Caonabo?

Caonabo was an Indian chief, a great fighter, one of the very first fighters to take root on Haitian soil. He opposed the occupation of his territory and the Spanish presence in Quisqueya. As a result of his position on this issue, he became Guacanagaric's enemy. He burned *Fort La Nativité* to the ground and killed many Spaniards. He would not collaborate with the enemy.

Caonabo made plans to destroy Isabella City, which Columbus had just finished building. He spoke to the other caciques, but they would not go along with him. Only one cacique agreed to back him up. It was Guarionex, the chief of Maguana.

Caonabo's army attacked Isabella City, but they were not very successful. The two armies were unequal. The Spaniards fought with rifles and swords, while the Indians used sticks and bows and arrows. The Indians suffered a major loss. At the same time, the Spaniards were shaken up by this attack. As a result, they pressured Columbus to get rid of Caonabo.

The End of Caonabo

Columbus decided to capture Caonabo the same way one would capture a wild animal. He used all the cunning at his disposal to accomplish this devious act.

Columbus called upon Ojeda to get rid of Caonabo. Ojeda was a sly officer who knew all the tricks in the book. His mission was to go to Niti, the village where Caonabo lived, to capture the cacique, to bring him back to Isabella City, and to turn him over to Columbus. The plan worked without a flaw. Ojeda went to Niti with ten officers. They paraded their horses around, showing off to the Indians. Caonabo did not want to receive them; he wanted them to go back to the place where they had come from. But Ojeda tricked Caonabo. He made him believe that the war between them was over and that he had come in a gesture of friendship. He gave the cacique an invitation to follow him to Isabella City so they could celebrate this happy occasion.

It wasn't until he arrived in Isabella City that Caonabo realized what had happened to him. But it was too late. He was loaded on a ship like cargo and sent off to Spain. He never made it. The boat sank and everyone perished.

The Battle of Vega Real

The Indians of Maguana were horrified by Caonabo's arrest. They decided to avenge him. Manicatex, a brother of Caonabo, spearheaded the movement. He was missing one eye, but that was no handicap for him. He was a brave warrior. His dream was to avenge Caonabo, to continue the fight and to drive the Spaniards out of the country.

As a result, Manicatex allied himself with Guarionex, the cacique of Maguana, and Mayobanex, another cacique who had settled in Ciguey. Together, they organized an army whose mission was to invade Isabella City. It was an army of 200,000 Indians. Their slogan was *Aya Bonbe*! *Aya Bonbe*! Unfortunately, their army never made it to Isabella City. The Spanish were waiting for them in the plain of Vega Real. This was not a battle; it was a massacre.

The Indians Become Slaves

After the massacre of Vega Real, the Spanish dominance of Hispaniola became apparent. All Indians were reduced to submission. Slavery became the rule of the land. This calamity did not only strike the Indians of Maguana, it affected all of them.

The Law of Slavery

The *repartimientos* system was a brutal one. The Indians were forced to work all day on tobacco plantations, cotton plantations, and gold mines. The Taino people were not used to this kind of hard labor. Under this cruel system, they began to die out one by one.

The End of Christopher Columbus

After all the humiliation he endured at the hand of the Spaniards, Columbus remained in Spain where he was reduced to idleness. The queen continued to protect him, but the king stripped him of his title of viceroy. Being a sailor at heart, Columbus took to the sea again. It was during that time that he discovered Colombia, the only country that inherited his name. Columbus did not live too much longer after that. Sickness and chagrin precipitated his end. He died like an indigent on May 20, 1506 at the age of 70 in Valladolid, a little town in Spain.

Columbus' Two Replacements: Bobadilla and Ovando

Under Bobadilla's reign, the Spaniards exacted whatever they could from the few remaining Indians. His brutality became so repugnant that Queen Isabella had to replace him. This happened in 1501.

The man who replaced Bobadilla was Nicolas Ovando. He landed in Santo Domingo on April 15, 1502. Ovando's main preoccupation was to exploit the gold mines. As a result, Indian slavery became more widespread under his tenure. It was Ovando himself who encouraged the introduction of sugar cane in Hispaniola. The seedlings were imported from the Canary Islands. The Indians were not used to this kind of hard labor. Some of them died, some fled, others revolted. Ovando decided to eliminate Anacaona and Cotubanama, both of whom he viewed as threats to his authority.

After the deaths of Caonabo, Anacaona, and Cotubanama, the Spaniards became the sole rulers of Hispaniola. They occupied all the territories and turned all the surviving Indians into domestics or slaves. Someone else who had first-hand knowledge of the cruelty perpetrated against the Indians was Bartolome de las Casas. He was a Catholic priest. We will talk some more about him later on. In the meantime, this is what he said, this is what he witnessed with his own eyes: "When the Spanish arrived in an Indian village, they would kill everyone including children, women, and the elderly. If a woman was pregnant, they would open her belly with a sword. As for the men, the Spanish would take bets to see who could cut an Indian in two with one stroke of a sword..."

This is how it was under Ovando's reign and under the Spanish occupation. Of the one million Indians that inhabited Haiti when the Spanish landed in 1492, only 500 were left around 1570. Mistreatment, illnesses and massacres were partly responsible for the extinction of Haiti's first population.

Blacks as Slaves in Hispaniola

After the extinction of the Indians, rumors began circulating that the Spaniards were going to replace them with Africans. There were many reasons for this. The Africans were perceived as a group of people who were hard workers and who could withstand the tropical heat and sun. As a result, the king of Spain began what would be called the slave trade. He would get as many slaves as he needed from Africa and would ship them to Hispaniola.

The slave trade gained momentum in Spain as a result of Las Casas' insistence. This priest urged the king to stop enslaving the Indians. He suggested to his majesty that he use strong black men from Guinea to replace the weakly Indians.

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Who was Las Casas?

Bartolome de las Casas was born in 1474. When Columbus arrived in Hispaniola, he was eighteen. He was studying to become a lawyer. At that time, Las Casas already had an Indian servant. We have to remember that as of 1494, Columbus had begun to send some Indians to Spain. In a letter addressed to the king, this is what Columbus had to say: "I loaded the ships with some cannibals, men, women, and children; I believe they can be placed with educated families so that they could learn our language and so that they could be of service to us too."

In the end, Las Casas was overcome with remorse especially in light of the Bible's message. He no longer wanted any part in the murders, the thefts, the rapes his companions were engaging in. As a result, he gave back all of his ill-gotten booties to the authorities. He became an advocate that would denounce Spanish injustices and come to the defense of the Indians. In 1552, Las Casas published a book that created quite a stir. The title of the book was *Brief History of the Destruction of the Indians and their Countries*. In the book, Las Casas stated: "The Spanish criminals caused the death of 15 million Indians."

Las Casas is credited by some historians to be a strong advocate of the Indians. Others, however, never forgave him for proposing that the Indians be replaced by blacks taken from Africa to work as slaves in the colonies. It was as if one form of injustice was being substituted by another. On this subject, William stated: "This great advocate of the Indians became a man who encouraged the trafficking of blacks..." In 1531, fifteen years after the title of "Protector of Indians" was bestowed upon him, Las Casas asked the Spanish government to send five to six hundred blacks to the colonies, and he added: "If the country is backward, it is because we do not have enough blacks." This is how Las Casas saw it: free the Indians, enslave the Blacks.

The French and the English Challenge Spain's Authority

By 1586 the Spanish government was facing many problems, both internally and externally. France and England grew tired of watching Spain amass all the gold of the Caribbean and they were itching to get their share of the action. As a result, England sent one of his admirals, Francis Drake, to the "New World" in 1586. His mission was to undermine Spain's control over the colonies and to bolster England's influence in the region. He attacked Santo Domingo. He plundered everything he could and he declared the city to be under his control. The population was forced to pay a ransom of 7,000 pounds sterling in order for him to leave.

In the meantime, the French had begun to settle on the island of *La Tortue* off the northern coast of Hispaniola. The *boucaniers* and the *flibustiers* were the first French subjects to reach the island.

The *boucaniers* and the *flibustiers* had a partnership. The *flibustiers* would provide the *boucaniers* with weapons, tools, and other goods they would steal from the ships. In return, the *boucaniers* would supply the *flibustiers* with meat and animal skins. It was this system of exchange that was called *matelotage*.

The *engagés* were a group of idle people who wanted to travel to the "New World". They did not have money to pay their way. Thus, they sold themselves and agreed to work as slaves for 36 months. Because of the nature of their engagement, they were called *engagés*. The first *engagés* were French. They worked for the *boucaniers*, some of whom had already turned their little gardens into big plantations. At the end of their contracts, the *engagés* became free. They would then choose to become *flibustiers* or *boucaniers*.

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Bertrand D'Ogeron, Governor of *La Tortue*

Hispaniola was still under Spanish domination. However, since the arrival of the *flibustiers*, the *boucaniers*, and the *engagés*, the French began to undermine Spanish rule in the country. They had begun to establish some settlements all over the coast, but they had truly taken roots in *La Tortue*. By 1625 they were all over the place. They had settlements in *La Gonâve, Trou Bourdet, L'Estère, Petite-Rivière, Léogane*, and *Rochelois*. This did not please the Spanish who attacked the French in *La Tortue*. With the help of Levasseur, the French were victorious. Thereafter, Levasseur established his headquarters in Basse Terre. He continued the fight against the Spaniards, but he did not last. He was assassinated. France sent two other emissaries, Rosaire and Fontney, one right after the other. Their mission was to restore order, to organize the *boucaniers*, the *flibustiers*, and the other inhabitants to create a stable French colony. These two men did the best they could to fight off the Spaniards and to retain the territories that France had already occupied. But the man who would truly come to organize the French part of the colony was Bertrand D'Ogeron. Who was he?

For some historians, D'Ogeron was a decent man who was forced by circumstances to live in the midst of *flibustiers*. But Madiou, the historian, felt that for a man to become commander of *flibustiers*, he had to become one himself. (Madiou, T. Histoire d'Haïti, Tome 2 (1799-1803). Port-au-Prince, Haiti, reproduction 1981.)

When D'Ogeron landed, there were 400 *flibustiers*. They were bandits who spread terror all over the Caribbean Sea. It was with these people that D'Ogeron was to lay the foundation of a French colony in the Americas.

Bertrand D'Ogeron's Accomplishments

1. It was under his rule that white women began to come to the colony.

2. He managed to put some order in the depraved lifestyle of the *boucaniers* and *flibustiers* that inhabited the island.

3. He encouraged the development of agriculture.

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4. He encouraged his compatriots who were living a life of piracy to change their ways, to become farmers and work the land.

5. He asked the king to resume the slave trade because the colony needed manpower for the growth of agriculture.

D'Ogeron's biggest dream was to invade the Spanish territories, to take all their land, and to place the whole island under French control. He would not see his dream come true. His return to Paris would be his last. He died in 1676 in a state of poverty.

The Treaty of Ryswick

France, England, and Spain were engaged in war. This war brought about a great deal of reprisals in the colony. The *filbustiers* did not miss any opportunity to raid or sink Spanish and English ships. The war ended in 1697. The warring parties signed an agreement known as the Treaty of Ryswick. As a result of this treaty, Spain recognized French rule in some parts of the island. According to this treaty:

1. Hispaniola was divided into two parts: one in the west, the other in the east.

2. The western part became a French territory.

3. The eastern part remained under Spanish rule.

To this day, one finds the French influence in Haiti and the Spanish influence in the Dominican Republic.

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SAINT-DOMINGUE AS A FRENCH COLONY

The Political Organization

We are now at the beginning of the 18th century. France appoints three high-ranking officials to *Saint-Domingue* as a way of establishing the foundation of its political power in the colony. The titles of these three officials are: *Gouverneur Général, Gouverneur Particulier*, and *Intendant*.

Saint-Domingue: A Changing Society

The beginning of the 19th century saw many changes take place in *Saint-Domingue*. One of them was the sugar cane revolution. The *boucaniers* and *flibustiers* stopped hunting to become farmers.

While it is true that the plantations were self-sustaining, the owners were not happy with this kind of limited production. They wanted to get rid of this garden-type economy to replace it with a market economy where the levels of production and profits would increase dramatically. They were contemplating an economy based on big plantations, factories, distilleries, and a large work force. As a result, the French brought a lot of slaves from Africa during that period to work on the sugar cane plantations.

The black population from Africa increased tremendously. The slaves came from Guinea, Congo, Dahomey (now known as Benin), Ghana, and Mali. They were chained like dogs, numbered like merchandise. They were bought and sold, branded like animals. They were also made to work like animals on the plantations, in the sugar cane factories and in the distilleries. In no time *Saint-Domingue* became a prosperous society. Commerce flourished. Ships came and went. They brought to France sugar, cocoa, cotton, indigo and coffee; they returned to *Saint-Domingue* with slaves, tools, and everything else the masters needed for their well-being. *Saint-Domingue* became a paradise for the French who became richer by the day as a result of their exploitation of slave labor.

The Classes of People in *Saint-Domingue*

There were three classes of people in *Saint-Domingue*:

A. The Whites
B. The *Affranchis*
C. The Blacks

A. The Whites

The Whites were divided into three groups. One group was extremely rich. They possessed a lot of land and many plantations. To this group of rich owners belonged members of the French bourgeoisie and nobility who remained in France while local caretakers supervised their businesses and properties. They were called the *grands blancs*. Another group of whites was the merchants. They had a monopoly on commerce. At the very bottom of the social scale were the *petits blancs*. It was in this category that office workers, smalltime farmers, small store owners, and people engaged in a trade or craft belonged. The *grands blancs* looked down on the *petits blancs*. They called them *blan poban* or *blan mannan*. We have to be careful not to confuse *blan poban* and *blan kreyòl*. The *blan kreyòl* were whites who were born in *Saint-Domingue*.

B. The *Affranchis*

When we speak of an *affranchi*, the first thing that comes to mind is a mulatto. The mulatto is the offspring of a white man and a black female slave. But it was not only the mulattoes that could be *affranchis*. Black slaves were also freed. There were several reasons why a slave would be granted freedom. Here are some examples:

a. The child of a white man and a black female slave would automatically be granted freedom. So would the mother.

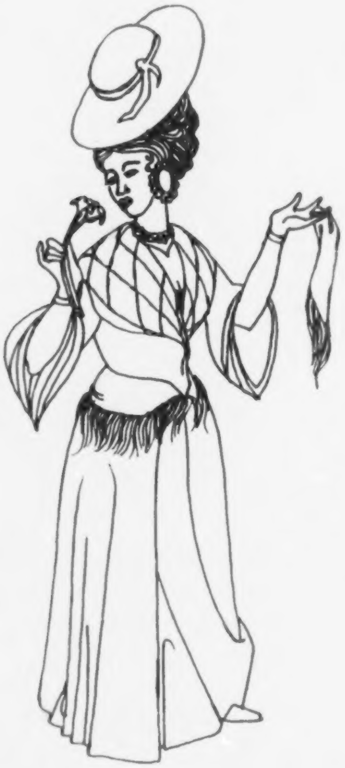
b. Slaves who performed a priceless service for the master could also be freed.

c. Old slaves who no longer had the strength to work could become free.

d. Some slaves paid money for their freedom.

On paper, however, especially in the document called *Code Noir*, there was no difference between whites and *affranchis*. Here is a quote from this document: "There are two kinds of people in Saint-Domingue, those who are free and those who are slaves." In theory, that would mean that the *affranchis* had the same rights as the whites because they both fell in the category of free people.

The only *affranchis* who enjoyed a relatively high degree of freedom were the ones who owned land. They even had slaves working for them. They tended to act like the whites. Sometimes, they would be crueler to the slaves than the whites.



C. The Blacks

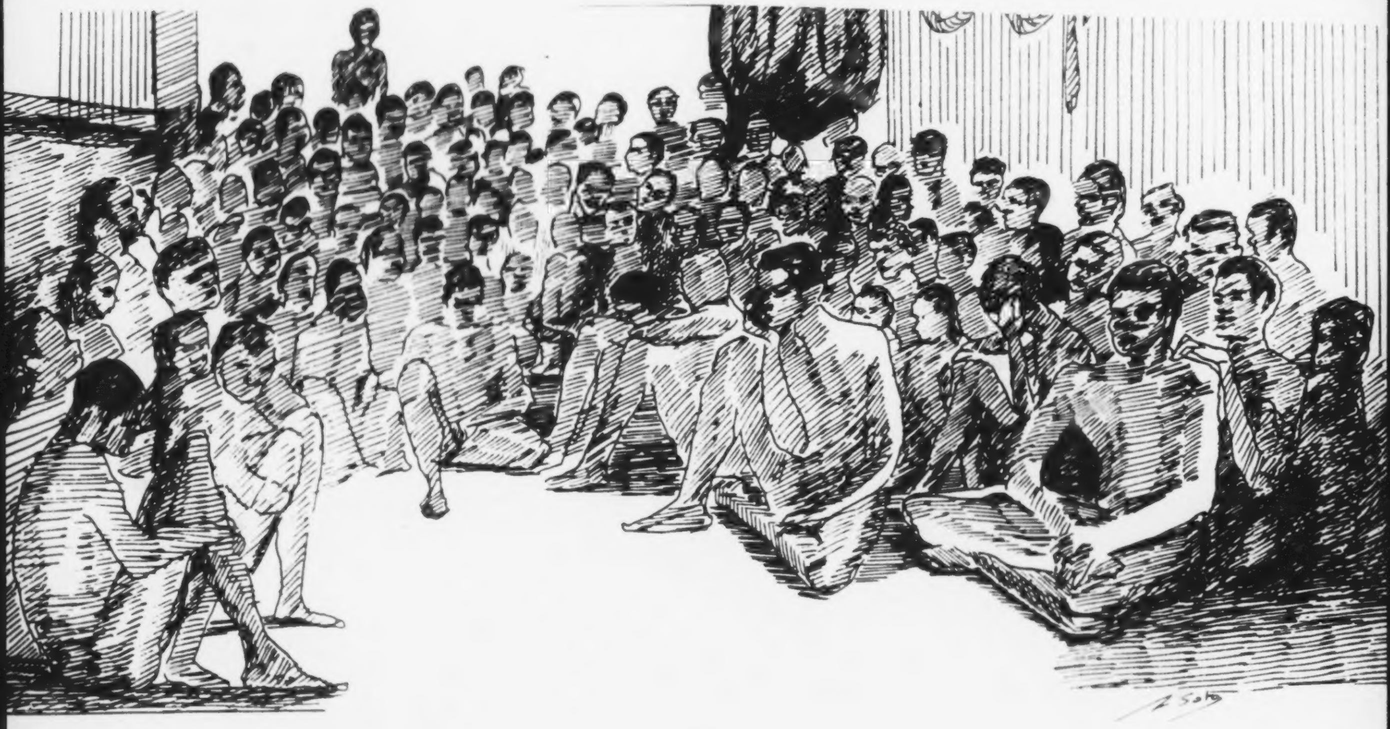
The Blacks belonged to the lowest class, the class that suffered all the humiliation at the hand of the masters, the class that was exploited for the benefit of others. According to Dorsainvil, there were about 500,000 black slaves at that time. A good number of them were born in *Saint-Domingue*. They were called *nèg kreyòl*. The rest who came directly from Africa were known as *nèg bosal*.

How did the *nèg bosal* end up in Saint-Domingue? We already spoke of the slave trade, a practice whereby slaves were bought and sold like merchandise by traders and plantation owners. They were hunted like prey, chained, and uprooted from their homelands in Africa. They were transported in ships that were designed especially for that purpose. A slave ship was like a floating prison, a kind of hell on earth where mistreatment, hunger, and disease would kill three quarters of the slaves even before they arrived at their destination. The ones who made it envied those who passed away. Their misery had just begun. A slave on a plantation or in a workshop was treated like an animal. He would begin working at daybreak and would labor continuously late into the night, especially during times of harvest. If he were to dare take a break or show signs of fatigue, he would be given a beating. In order to understand the situation of the slaves during that period, it is important for us to take a look at a document called *Code Noir*.

Code Noir

By 1685 the situation in Saint-Domingue had begun to show some signs of tension. The whites were oppressing the blacks, who in turn began to rebel. France did not want that situation to deteriorate any further. As a result, Louis XIV promulgated a document entitled *Code Noir*. *Code Noir* contained 60 articles. Aside from a series of articles that showed little mercy for the slaves, there were some that seemed designed to offer them some degree of protection.

It is clear that *Code Noir* was not meant to guarantee the individual rights of slaves. As a matter of fact, it stipulated that slaves were not human beings; they were like furniture. They did not have the right to complain; they could not protest against the injustices perpetrated against them. If one of them dared to lay a hand on a master, he would die. Article 16 of the *Code Noir* even forbade the slaves from having any kind of contact with one another. As a result, all types of meetings, e.g., baptisms, weddings, dances and funerals were prohibited.



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THE *AFFRANCHIS'* STRUGGLE FOR POLITICAL RIGHTS

The "Human Rights Declaration" document of 1789 fueled the *affranchis'* demand for justice and equality. This movement was spearheaded by Vincent Ogé and Julien Chavannes, two *affranchis* who were living in France. They fought very hard to rally support for their cause by seeking the help of friends and organizations devoted to change in *Saint-Domingue*. One of the organizations that came to their help was *La Société des Amis des Noirs*.

With the help of these supporters, Ogé even managed to address a group of deputies from the Paris National Assembly. In his speech, Ogé's position was clear. He was defending the interests of his own class, the *affranchis*, not the slaves. Here is what he said: "We do not come to plead in favor of the slaves; they are not yet ready for freedom... they must be under someone's command. When a slave becomes free, he refuses to work. A slave who is no longer under the supervision of a master inevitably sinks into idleness and savagery."

It is clear Ogé was not interested in the slaves' plight. His main concern was to advocate for the rights of the *affranchis*. After a good deal of debate on the issue, the Paris National Assembly issued a decree granting political rights to the *affranchis*. It was known as the March 8th decree. Having political rights is one thing, being able to enjoy them is another. Naturally, the powerful whites from *Cap-Haïtien*, the big plantation owners, the intendants, the governors and the less influential whites were all against the March 8th decree. We have to remember this decree granted the *affranchis* the right to vote and the right to hold certain key positions in the colony. This measure angered the whites. They did not want the *affranchis* to become their equal. As a result, they refused to apply the March 8th decree. To them, it was worthless.

Vincent Ogé in *Cap-Haitien*

Ogé rushed to *Cap-Haïtien* to convince the whites to accept the March 8th decree. Once again, he attempted to negotiate with them at the expense of the slaves. This is what he wrote in a letter he sent to the Provincial Assembly of *Cap-Haïtien*: "I have no intentions of staging an uprising with the slaves working in the shops... Such a project does not become me; I have dignity. I am advocating for the rights of the *affranchis*, a class of free people. I am making my demands very nicely. If I don't get satisfaction, there could be trouble.

Chavannes

Chavannes and Ogé were good friends. They decided to work together to fight the whites who were refusing to recognize the political rights of the *affranchis*.

But Chavannes and Ogé did not exactly have the same strategy as to how the fight should be led. Chavannes seemed more open-minded. He had a better understanding of the forces at work in *Saint-Domingue*. He tried to convince Ogé of the need to include the slaves in this fight. Ogé refused categorically. He was afraid of losing control of the situation. He feared that if they were successful, the slaves might decide to push for total liberation.

The Death of Ogé and Chavannes

Ogé was a mulatto who did not integrate black slaves or freed blacks in his movement. He did not listen to Chavannes' advice. So, it was an army of mulattoes with little back-up that had to face the colonial army, or in a larger sense, the colonial system. As a result, the big plantation owners, the merchants, the less powerful whites, and the governors joined forces to squelch Ogé's movement. At the beginning, the mulattoes dealt some blow to the colonial army, but after a while they were weakened and eventually defeated. At that point, Ogé and Chavannes fled into the Spanish side of the island. After some negotiations between the French and Spanish authorities, they were sent back to *Cap-Haïtien*. When they got there, they were given a semblance of a trial and then were sentenced to death. They were executed in the public square on February 25, 1791.

THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

The *Grands Blancs*

The 1789 revolution, which resulted in the dismantling of the old regime in France upset the big plantation owners in *Saint-Domingue*. They wanted to keep the system of slavery in place. They did not want any part of the slogan: *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*. The notion that people were equal under the law was something that applied to France, not the colony. That is why the plantation owners joined with the *petits blancs* to rebel against France. When the French authorities got wind of the situation, they dispatched an emissary to the colony to try to restore order, but to no avail. The plantation owners preferred to sever relations with France rather than recognize the rights of the *affranchis* and the slaves.

Boukman, Leader of the Maroons

The slaves were not waiting for a savior to come and liberate them. They fought tirelessly to break the chains of slavery. One has to remember Mackandal or the story of the maroons to realize that the issue of freedom was not negotiable. Only through armed struggle could that goal be reached. Boukman understood that well, and he thought of organizing a big ceremony in *Bois-Caïman* with other maroons. Some historians saw this gathering as a "political congress." Others viewed it as nothing else but a voodoo ceremony. But before we talk about the ceremony, let us see who Boukman was.

Boukman was born in Jamaica. He was a voodoo priest who had ties to voodoo practice in Dahomey. He was feared by both whites and blacks. He had an impressive stature. He organized a major service in *Bois-Caïman* on the night of August 14, 1791.

Many slaves gathered for the service. Before Boukman had a chance to utter a word, the sky exploded with thunder and lightning. The wind and the rain beat against the trees. The crowd began to moan and groan; they began to scream. Branches fell to the ground; whole trees were uprooted.

In this electric atmosphere, the crowd witnessed something they had never seen before. A voodoo priestess jumped up in the air. Her body slithered like that of a snake. She was in a trance. Someone brought her a pig. She took a knife and plunged it into the animal's body. The blood gushed out like water from a faucet. Each slave drank some of the blood. They swore complete allegiance to Boukman.

Why the Ceremony of *Bois-Caïman*?

Without a doubt, this was a voodoo ceremony. All the elements were there: voodoo priest and priestess, animal sacrifice, singing, dancing, adoration, communion (the crowd drank raw blood). It was also a political act. It gave the slaves a sense of direction, a leader, an organization. Rolph Trouillot argues this issue very cleverly in *Ti Dife Boule sou Istwa Ayiti*. This is what he had to say: "In all honesty the slaves of *Saint-Domingue* needed an organization they were familiar with when they were ready to take action. Voodoo provided that structure" (p. 74). Later on, on the same issue of voodoo, he wrote: "In 1791, voodoo gave the slaves a greater conviction to fight. It was like a glue that made them come together." (p.74)

THE REVOLT OF 1791

In 1791, *Saint-Domingue* erupted like a volcano. The situation was worse in the north than in the south or the west.

The North

Even before they knew Dessalines, the slaves of the north began setting homes on fire. On the night of August 22, 1791 a group of slaves led by Boukman, Jean-François, and Jeannot massacred many whites. Neither women nor children were spared. They were armed with sticks and pikes. A man like Jeannot put into practice the saying "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." He tied a colonist between two boards and sawed him in half. It was during this attack that took place in *Fond Bleu* near *L'Acul* that Boukman lost his life. The whites took advantage of his death to send a message to his supporters. They cut his head and displayed it in the public square in *Cap-Haïtien* with an inscription that read: "This is Boukman's head, leader of the rebels."

The West and the South

The authorities in *Saint-Domingue* were very concerned about the slave revolt in the north. They did not want this uprising to spread to the west and the south. As a result, the governor ordered that a series of military outposts be built on top of the mountains to monitor the movement of the slaves. Did these measures yield good results? We do not know. But the reality is that what happened in the north never took place in the south.

Attacks by the slaves against the whites were rare in the south. Was it that the slaves in the south did not have a valiant leader like Boukman? It is hard to say. In any case, they had many leaders, including Lafortune, Lamour Dérance, Romaine la Prophétesse, Hyacinthe, Laplume, etc. In order to understand why the revolt of 1791 that took place in the north did not repeat itself in the south, let us listen again to historian Rolph Trouillot: "There were many maroons in the south and in the west. They were organized and they took refuge in the biggest chains of mountains in the country: La Selle, La Hotte, Trou-d'Eau... There were pros and cons to this situation. These areas were so isolated that the maroons lost sight of the social contradictions that made them escape in the first place; the mountains allowed them to ignore these contradictions." (p.76)

The Civil Commissions

The demands of the slaves, the *affranchis* and the white colonists left Saint-Domingue in a chaotic situation in 1791. The French government fearing that it might lose this colony, dispatched a civil commission to *Saint-Domingue*.

The commission landed in *Cap-Haïtien*. It was composed of three members: Roume, Mirbeck, and Saint Léger. The commission's mission was to restore order; but it was not an easy task. First of all, the members of the commission were on unfamiliar grounds. Besides, it took them some time to realize that each group in *Saint-Domingue* was fighting for its own interests. None of the compromises the commission offered were accepted. The slaves continued to rebel. The whites kept refusing to recognize the rights of the *affranchis*; the mulattoes did not want to ally themselves with the freed blacks. The members of the commission got discouraged. They left *Saint-Domingue* one after the other, starting with Saint Léger and ending with Roume.

After the failure of the first commission, a second one was sent to *Saint-Domingue* on September 18, 1792. The three members of this new commission were Ailhaud, an aristocrat; Polvérel, a bourgeois, and Sonthonax, a "revolutionary". This commission was entrusted with more power. One of its roles was to make sure that the April 4th law was implemented, giving the *affranchis* certain rights.

As a way of supporting their mission, the French government gave the members of this commission the right to remove anyone from any position in *Saint-Domingue*, the right to use force against any plantation owner or other individual who tried to stand in the way of their mission. In addition, the government put 15 ships and 6,000 soldiers at their disposal.

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In spite of all these measures, things did not look very promising for the second civil commission. Even before they landed in *Cap-Haïtien*, while they were still at sea, Louis XVI, who had sent them, was deposed. He was arrested, tried, sentenced, and decapitated.

Sonthonax in Saint-Domingue

Sonthonax was not well seen when he landed in *Saint-Domingue*. The whites, who were the slave owners, did not trust him at all. While trying to dig some dirt on him, they discovered a declaration he made in 1791. This declaration seemed to be in favor of the blacks who were the victims of injustice in *Saint-Domingue*. This is what he said: "The blacks ought to become the owners of all the land in *Saint-Domingue*; they have certainly worked hard for it."

We do not know how sincere Sonthonax was, but when the whites started giving him trouble in 1792, he changed his tune. What was important to Sonthonax was to turn the April 4th decree into a reality, thereby recognizing the political rights of the *affranchis*.

Sonthonax's First Actions

Sonthonax soon realized that the whites who formed the colonial assembly were acting in bad faith. As a result, he decided to get rid of this influential decision-making body and to replace it with a mixed commission. This new body consisted of six whites and six *affranchis*. Thereafter, he created a new colonial assembly. These measures were not well received by the big plantation owners or the governor. Together, they began conspiring to eliminate Sonthomax. Two noteworthy plots against Sonthonax were known as the *d'Esparbès Plot* and the *Galbaud Plot*.

General Freedom for all Slaves

On August 29, 1793, Sonthonax made a declaration granting freedom to all the slaves in the North. Polvérel followed suit in the West and the South. All the blacks were freed, and slavery was abolished.

Was this true? That's what Sonthonax had declared. That's what the circumstances called for; but the big landowners and the friends of Louis XVI's old regime swore not to accept the fact that the slaves were becoming free people like everyone else. They would rather betray France. Some of them went as far as to change their nationalities to English or Spanish. Many soldiers whose mission was to defend the colony became deserters. As a result, cities such as Port-au-Prince, Saint-Marc and Môle-Saint-Nicolas fell to the hands of the British.

The soldiers were not the only traitors. There were mulattoes who aligned themselves with the whites in order to block the slaves' quest for freedom. They drew up a petition with three hundred signatures requesting the condemnation and cancellation of all measures taken by the commissioners, whom they thought had a secret plan to turn *Saint-Domingue* into a country populated by blacks only. This rumor made its way to France.

Friends of the colonists requested that the commissioners be arrested for treason. This plan did not work. On the contrary. *La Convention* in France was in agreement with Sonthonax. This body went even further than the commissioners. It declared that, as of February 4, 1794, slavery was abolished in all the French colonies. That's the news that Captain Chambon brought with him when he came to *Saint-Domingue* aboard a ship named *L'Espérance*. He also brought with him a letter requesting that all the commissioners return to France immediately. As they were getting ready to go back to France, they learned a very important news: Toussaint Louverture, who was fighting under the King of Spain's flag, had switched sides. He was now an ally of France.

BLACK POWER: THE FIGHT FOR INDEPENDENCE

Black power or the fight for independence really began when Toussaint Louverture made the decision to leave the King of Spain's army to come back to *Saint-Domingue* to fight on the side of the slaves against the white colonists.

Who was Toussaint Louverture?

Toussaint was a creole slave, born in *Saint-Domingue* in 1743. Many historians believe that he was the grandson of a great African King named Gaou-Guinou.

Toussaint was not big in stature; he was rather frail-looking. However, as a result of exercise, he developed a strong body. He was also an excellent horseman.

An extraordinary man, Toussaint learned to read and write without ever setting foot in a school. It was his godfather, a man by the name of Pierre Baptiste, who began teaching him. Thereafter, he continued learning on his own. His passion for sports was only equaled by his love of reading. Historians recount how Toussaint fell in love with a great philosophy book written by Reynald, an abbey. This book foretold the story of a great man who will appear to avenge all the injustices that blacks endure on earth. This story intrigued Toussaint. He saw a connection between himself and the avenger of the black race. He even wondered if the book was not making reference to him.

What we know for certain is that Toussaint was a talented and courageous man. He knew how to set traps for animals and how to care for sick horses using medicine he would prepare himself. Toussaint was also a brave soldier. He was an excellent leader who made wonderful things happen wherever he went. Whether he was fighting for Spain or France, his successes were impressive. In 1791, when the slaves decided to put an end to slavery, Toussaint did not back down. He emerged as the leader that the black masses were waiting for.

Toussaint's Plan

In 1794, Toussaint was the most popular general in *Saint-Domingue*. Wherever he went, he was able to establish order. Black and whites, slaves and *affranchis* all saw in him a leader and a good administrator who had the discipline and competence to govern *Saint-Domingue*.

His popularity made him the envy of other generals who had fought to liberate *Saint-Domingue* from the grips of the Spanish and the English. We have to say, however, that Toussaint did not have the same goals as the other generals. His plan was to be *Saint-Domingue's* supreme leader so that the country would no longer have to take orders from France. In order to reach his goal, Toussaint would eliminate everyone who stood in his way. He forced Hédouville to return to France on October 23, 1798.

The Civil War

Hédouville left Toussaint and Rigaud at each other's throats. These two generals, Toussaint in the West and Rigaud in the South had joined their forces to combat the British. Now they were bitter enemies. Toussaint understood the game that was being played, but Rigaud didn't. The latter had let Hédouville brainwash him. He was acting like a tyrant. Rumors had it that he took pleasure in mistreating the blacks who were under his command. Toussaint realized that Rigaud was not an ally, and perhaps never was. In order to put an end to Rigaud's two-faced tactics, he decided to go on the offensive. The war of the South had begun.

The War of the South

The war of the South divided *Saint-Domingue* into two camps. In the mulatto camp were found people like Riguad, Géffrard, Faubert and Pétion. In the black camp there were men like Toussaint, Dessalines and Christophe. In was a bloody war but, at the end, the black camp was victorious. Wherever Dessalines, Toussaint and Christophe went, mulattoes fell in large numbers. Rigaud, his family, and some of his supporters (e.g. Pétion and Boyer) had to flee to France. Nobody knows for sure how many people died in that civil war. The official numbers claimed there were 15,000 victims.

Toussaint at the Height of his Power

When the war of the South ended, Toussaint became the sole general-in-chief in *Saint-Domingue*. At the height of his power, he decided to march on Santo Domingo in order to conquer the whole island. There was one problem, however.

Roume, a former commissioner, did not agree with Toussaint's plan to attack Santo Domingo, but the general managed to make him leave the country, just as he did with Sonthonax, Hédouville, and Rigaud.

Toussaint's Star Continues to Shine

In January 1801, Toussaint organized an army of 25,000 people. It was divided into two battalions, one under the command of Moyse, the other headed by Toussaint. Moyse did not encounter too many problems. In no time, he managed to occupy Santiago. This happened on January 15, 1801. Toussaint moved even faster. The day before, he took possession of Azua. On January 28, 1801, Toussaint entered Santo Domingo as a conqueror, with pomp and circumstance. Governor Garcia, the head of the city, along with his delegation, came to welcome Toussaint and to offer him the key to the city. After many speeches, the ceremony moved to the cathedral of Santo Domingo where a *Te Deum* service was offered.

Toussaint as the Sole Ruler

With the Santo Domingo victory, Toussaint became the sole ruler in the colony. As a result, he decided to set up an administrative structure.

To begin with, he divided the country into districts, each one under the control of two or more generals. Toussaint took other measures in relation to agriculture. He was very strict in that area. If you were black, you had to be either a soldier or an agricultural worker. He did not tolerate idleness. If a black person refused to work, he was subject to beatings or even death.

The laws were really tough, and Toussaint made no concessions. For example, a black man who became an agricultural worker had to work on a white-owned plantation for five years. This type of measures did not please the former slaves. It reminded them of the kind of tactics the whites used against them. Toussaint had to use force to quell some peasant and agricultural workers' rebellions. It was at this juncture that he came face to face with General Moyse, Toussaint's nephew. They did not see eye to eye on land issues. General Moyse was a brave man who led one of the two regiments of soldiers in Toussaint's bid to unify the island.

Toussaint appointed Moyse inspector of agriculture. Moyse's mission was to punish those who were perceived as lazy, arrest those who refused to work, and hang all rebels who wanted to create trouble on the plantations. Moyse did not agree with these measures. He was more interested in listening to the grievances of the workers.

The End of Moyse

Toussaint had Moyse arrested. He accused him of inciting the peasants who did not agree with the measures his administration had enacted on land issues. He had Moyse tried; but the judge did not find sufficient cause to sentence him. Therefore, he was released. Toussaint was incensed. He set up his own tribunal, acted as judge, tried Moyse, found him guilty, and had him executed.

The 1801 Constitution: An Independence that Could Have Been

After Moyse's death, there was much discontent. Some agricultural workers wanted to react but, in general, there was an atmosphere of calm in all the five departments. Besides, Toussaint had announced that anyone bent on creating trouble would have the same fate as Moyse.

At that time, the plantations and factories were flourishing. According to some historians, *Saint-Domingue* was one of France's richest colonies. The Toussaint administration produced 7 million pounds of logwood and lignum vitae, 650,000 pounds of cocoa, 16,000 pounds of sugar and 99,000 pounds of syrup. The economy was thriving.

During that same period, Toussaint asked the delegates from the five departments to meet in order to vote on a constitution. They went along with Toussaint, and on May 9, 1801, the constitution was ratified. Two months later, on July 8th, the constitution was printed and put into circulation. Thereafter, the document was sent to France.

France's Reaction

When the 1801 constitution reached France, it caused an uproar. People from the old regime saw it as the act of a man in rebellion against the Republic. A man like Villaret-Joyeuse said categorically: "*Saint-Domingue* is the property of the French people, people from Africa can lay no claim to it." As for Bonaparte, he wanted to cross the ocean, capture Toussaint, and arrest him for insolence. In a letter sent to Toussaint, he reprimanded him. He said: "Now that we are at peace with England and all the other countries of Europe, it is up to us to decide the future of *Saint-Domingue*." Further along in the letter, Bonaparte seemed to be saying to Toussaint that he was no longer in charge. He added, "We are sending citizen Leclerc, our brother-in-law, to *Saint-Domingue*. He is coming as captain-general, as the supreme authority in the colony. He is bringing with a him a formidable armed force in order to enforce France's hegemony over *Saint-Domingue*". He also sent a public proclamation that echoed all the sentiments found in the letter.

Bonaparte Invades *Saint-Domingue*

The 1801 constitution infuriated Bonaparte. He wanted to put Toussaint in his place for his arrogance. On February 1, 1802, a fleet of ships armed with heavy weapons arrived in the port of Cap-Haïtien. It included 22,000 people and 86 ships. Leclerc, Bonaparte's brother, was sent as captain-general in *Saint-Domingue*. He was also in charge of the army. The person commanding the fleet was Admiral Villaret-Joyeuse.

In any case, the mission was not as easy as Villaret-Joyeuse and Leclerc had expected. They had thought that they would meet little resistance; but they were wrong. Leclerc gave Christophe a 24 hour ultimatum to surrender the city of Cap-Haïtien, but Christophe answered him with the same arrogance, "I don't claim that you will not enter Cap-Haïtien, but only after we've set that city on fire, and we will continue fighting you even in its ruins. These were Toussaint's instructions. When words reached him that the whites were about to land, he said, "If the whites from Europe attack us, set fire to all the positions you cannot defend and take to the mountains."

The "Haitian" generals and their soldiers were no match for the French army. In Port-au-Prince, Magny and Lamartinière gave up rather quickly; in Les Cayes, Laplume offered no resistance. The only place Toussaint's army offered some resistance was at La Crête-à-Pierrot.

The Battle of La Crête-à-Pierrot

When Leclerc's army was gaining ground on the indigenous army, Toussaint decided to concentrate all his forces inside a fort named *La Crête-à-Pierrot*. Inside the fort were 2,000 men led by Dessalines, Magny and Lamartinière. In spite of repeated attacks, the indigenous army managed to mount a good resistance.

Rochambeau, another French general, arrived on the scene with a fresh group of soldiers. This time, the pounding was unrelenting. The fort had become a living hell for the indigenous army.

Thirst, hunger, and the excruciating heat forced the generals to change their plans. As a result, the indigenous soldiers left the fort and tried to create an escape route through the ranks of the French army. After a bloody battle, they were successful. This action impressed the French. For an army of former slaves, who never had any formal military training, such a strategy was truly amazing.

Bad Omen for Toussaint

After the battle of *La Crête-à-Pierrot*, Leclerc started a defamation campaign against Toussaint. He spread the rumor that Toussaint had betrayed the Republic; he even tried to turn Christophe and other generals from the indigenous army against Toussaint. Christophe did not fall for it.

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Toussaint's Submission

On May 6, 1802, Toussaint went to Cap-Haïtien and made it known that he had stopped fighting against Leclerc. He received a rousing welcome in that city. He then decided to retire to his plantation in Ennery.

Toussaint's Arrest

General Brunet was even more expert than Ojeda at planning kidnappings. Remember that Ojeda had kidnapped Caonabo during the Spanish reign. General Brunet wrote Toussaint a letter to invite him to a conference. As soon as Toussaint arrived, he was arrested and deported to France on a ship called *Le Héros*. While on the ship, Toussaint uttered these famous words, "Getting rid of me is like cutting the trunk of the tree that symbolizes freedom for the blacks; it will grow back from the roots since they are deep and numerous."

Toussaint Dies in France in Fort de Joux

Upon his arrival in France, Toussaint was thrown into a cold dungeon inside a big prison named Fort de Joux that was perched atop a mountain. He developed a fever and a cough. No doctor ever went to see him. The instructions were to let the prisoner die a slow death.

The Death of Toussaint: Reactions in Saint-Domingue

Toussaint's death opened the eyes of the black class in *Saint-Domingue*. They realized that freedom could only be won through a hard, unrelenting struggle. As a result, they began once again to create havoc in the colony. Leclerc who, at that point, was suffering from yellow fever, decided to quell any uprising. He managed to dupe Dessalines into thinking that he was the most powerful leader in the colony since Toussaint's death. This resulted in jealousy and rivalry among the black leaders. Dessalines and Charles Belair became enemies. The latter had staged an uprising against the whites. Leclerc asked Dessalines to quell the insurrection. Dessalines arrested Belair for subversion and had him executed.

Belair's execution did not intimidate the blacks. Men like Lamour, Dérance, Lafortune, and others drove Leclerc and Dessalines crazy with fighting strategies equivalent to what we today refer to as guerilla warfare.

Dessalines was not the only one working on Leclerc's side. General Maurepas lost his life because he took Leclerc seriously. He was arrested and thrown overboard a ship along with his wife and children.

The Blacks Unite in their Quest for Independence

The deaths of Toussaint and Marepas opened many people's eyes. They realized that Leclerc's plan was to eliminate the black and mulatto officers and to eventually restore slavery. This realization made a man like Dessalines quit Leclerc's army to fight alongside the maroon slaves as a rebel, a revolutionary. Pétion followed suit and decided to stand by Dessalines.

The Battle of Vertières

By the end of October 1803, the French army had lost a lot of ground in *Saint-Domingue*. The war, yellow fever and sorrow had claimed many casualties in the French ranks. Leclerc's death and Rochambeau's take-over aggravated the situation. The indigenous army was making advances. There were only two cities left under Rochambeau's command: Cap-Haïtien and Môle-Saint-Nicolas. In the morning of November 18, 1803, Dessalines decided to go on the offensive. He attacked Cap-Haïtien. This was the battle of Vertières, the final blow that would crush the system of slavery that the French had established in *Saint-Domingue*.

It was during this battle that Capois earned the name *Capois-la-Mort*. He distinguished himself for his bravery to the point that Rochambeau requested a halt to the fighting in order to pay homage to the black officer.

The Battle of Vertières was the last major battle the indigenous army fought against the colonial army of Napoleon. When Gabart finally occupied La Butte Charier, it was the end. From that position, he was able to destroy all the cannons Rochambeau had installed in Vertières. There was nothing left for the French general to do but surrender. This happened on November 18, 1803. It was the end of slavery and the beginning of Haiti's independence.

HAITI, AN INDEPENDENT COUNTRY

When the war ended, the indigenous army was confronted with the task of building a country. Dessalines, who spearheaded the fight for independence, became the leader of the country. One of Dessalines' first actions was to discard the name of *Saint-Domingue* and replace it with *Haiti*, the name given to the island by its first inhabitants. Secondly, he enlisted the help of Boisrond Tonnere to write the country's declaration of independence. Thirdly, he named himself governor general for life with the right to make laws, declare war and name his successor. This political act took place on January, 1804.

As we can see, Haiti's first government was autocratic in nature. Dessalines had the power to do whatever he wanted and not be accountable to anyone for his actions.

Dessalines Takes Steps to Defend the New Country

The war had ended, and the country was now independent; but there were rumors that the French would come back to reestablish slavery in their former colony. Dessalines had to maintain a military regime where the generals from the independence war would become regional commanders. Having organized the army, the governor general ordered his officers to build forts throughout the country. As a result, Christophe built *La Citadelle Laferrière* near Cap-Haïtien. Other forts that were built were *Fort Marfranc* near Jérémie, *Fort Jacques* and *Fort Aléxandre* near Port-au-Prince, and *La Forteresse des Platons* near Les Cayes.

This strategy was put in place to protect the new country's independence; but unfortunately, it also created a mentality where every general in the Haitian army set himself up as an absolute ruler.

The Massacre of the French

One could foresee this massacre since the very first day of independence. Boisrond-Tonnerre, one of the principal writers of the declaration of independence, was pushing Dessalines to order the massacre.

The massacre began in Les Cayes when Dessalines was visiting that city. Thereafter, it spread to various parts of the country. Many Haitian good samaritans risked their lives by hiding former French colonists in their houses. Dessaline's wife, Claire Heureuse, saved many French lives, unbeknownst to her husband. Pétion risked his own life in order to save some white officers. Dessalines was advised not to kill those French colonists who could provide valuable assistance to the emerging nation. He heeded that advice. As a result, he ordered his troops to spare people like priests, teachers, pharmacists, and anyone else deemed valuable to the country.

Dessalines, the Emperor

The title of Governor General for life did not seem to satisfy Dessalines. On September 22, 1804, he made himself emperor. He was crowned by Father Corneille Brelle on October 8 in a church in Cap-Haïtien. Dessalines once said that he wanted to be the only nobleman in Haiti. This declaration reflected what was written in the 1805 constitution, the first constitution of Haiti as an independent nation. According to this document, Dessalines had absolute power. He was emperor, judge, jury and policeman all at once.

In order to give his dictatorship a nationalist facade, Dessalines introduced a law in the constitution that forbade foreigners from owning property in Haiti. This law would be abolished in 1915 during the American occupation.

Dessalines' Administration

Dessalines' dream was to build a nation where everyone who fought for independence would find his/her place in the sun. He felt, however, that certain potentates wanted to grab all the state lands and some properties left behind by Rochambeau and his associates. He would not have any of that. In answer to a group of mulattoes who were laying claims to properties left behind by the French, Dessalines answered, "What about the Blacks who left their ancestors in Africa; you are out to deprive them of everything."

This was a beautiful statement. Yet, Dessalines allowed the high ranking officers in the army to take possession of the best lands and properties. In addition, some of the members of Dessalines' entourage were getting rich by making counterfeit titles, thus allowing people to obtain land illegally. Men like Vernet and Vastey, both working in the ministry of finance, were heavily engaged in the trafficking of counterfeit titles.

Dessalines was killed on October 17, 1806. His death resulted in a struggle for power between two generals, Christophe and Pétion. The latter along with his associate Gérin, both men having been involved in Dessalines' death, summoned a meeting of an Assembly to discuss the country's future. The Assembly voted a new constitution which made Haiti a republic. This means a country headed by a president.

The person who had the most support from the Assembly to become president was Christophe. Pétion and Gérin tried everything they could to stand in his way. They delayed the election; they added more deputies to regions where they were more popular. All these efforts were in vain. The Assembly wanted Christophe, and they chose him as president on December 28, 1806.

According to the new constitution, all the power was given to a 24-member senate. Christophe was not happy with this situation. He organized an army in the North and marched toward Port-au-Prince to confront Pétion. This resulted in what is known as the Battle of Sibert. Christophe dealt the first blow. Pétion's troops were routed. He was nearly killed. He was saved by one of his officers, Coutilien Courtard, who switched hats with him. This brave officer was killed instead of his commander. In the meantime, Pétion went back to Port-au-Prince. He reorganized his troops in order to defend Port-au-Prince. This time, he was successful. He was able to repel repeated assaults from the enemy. Finally, Christophe got discouraged and retreated. He ordered scores of massacres on his way back to the North. Upon reaching Cap-Haitien, he divided the country into two parts and declared the northern state his domain. His territory included the north, the northwest and the Artibonite Valley.

This struggle for power, which began after Dessalines' death, continued relentlessly until the American occupation of Haiti in 1915.

Two Leaders for One Country

A) *King Henri Christophe*

King Henri Christophe used the European feudal system as a model to organize his northern kingdom. He seemed to favor the English system where the King had absolute power. He did not tolerate any opposition to his rule. Capois-La-Mort, one of the independence heroes, was assassinated for inciting people in the Northwest to revolt against the Haitian monarch. Christophe is considered by many to be an enlightened dictator for the following reasons:

a) Under Christophe's rule, peasants could not go to the city to become engaged in idle behavior. He also brought back Toussaint's rural code which required people to go to the countryside to work the land.

b) The production of sugar, coffee and cotton was booming.

c) The state treasury was in good shape. Civil servants were held accountable for all money transactions. Every morning, customs employees had to report to the king's office for a report on their financial dealings.

d) There was a strong will to build schools throughout the country. When the state did not have the means to achieve this goal, it appealed to various notables to create private institutions.

e) Catholicism was recognized as the only official religion of the country. Christophe encouraged, even forced people to marry in the church. He even went so far as to prohibit people from getting divorced.

f) Many wonderful palaces were built: *Palais de Sans-Souci, Palais de Milot*, etc. *La Citadelle La Ferrière* constructed under Christophe is considered to be the eighth wonder of the world.

King Christophe has some major accomplishments to his credit. However, the means he employed did not always justify the end. Many people died helping him realize some of his dreams. While it's true that the production of coffee, sugar, and cotton was booming, the people who helped to produce these crops were not treated with respect and dignity. It's as if they had been slaves.

B) Alexandre Pétion

Alexandre Pétion was a "good old guy" by temperament. In matters of politics, he was an opportunist. This is what Alain Turnier had to say about him, "While Dessalines and Christophe were two loyal soldiers, Pétion took up arms against Toussaint in the civil war of the south. When things did not work out for him, he went into exile in France. Later on, he accompanied Leclerc on his expedition to defeat the indigenous army. He was fighting on the French side at the battle of La Crête-à-Pierrot. When he learned that slavery was going to be restored and that the French were near victory, he changed sides again and aligned himself with Dessalines." (Quand La Nature Demande des Comptes, p.24)

Pétion had no problem making alliances. He was a man without conviction. Alliances that were made today could be broken tomorrow. He betrayed Toussaint, he betrayed Leclerc, he betrayed Dessalines. In the end, he even betrayed the Senate. He had his soldiers invade a meeting of that parliamentary body and pressure its members to vote a measure giving the president absolute power. Later on in 1815, 5 out 24 senators met, declared themselves a majority, and reelected Pétion for four years.

A new constitution was voted in in 1816 naming Pétion president for life. This action should have made him many political enemies but that did not happen. On the contrary, Pétion was well-liked by many politicians because he turned a blind eye to various corrupt practices. He also did not abuse his authority. He was regarded as a weak administrator with a laissez faire attitude.

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A Republic in Three Parts

In 1807, the country was divided into three parts. It was as if the independence the ancestors fought so bitterly for was being squandered.

The Unification of the North and the West

Pétion died on March 29, 1818 from typhoid fever. In that same year, the senate elected Jean-Pierre Boyer president for life. Two years later, Henri Christophe, who was overwhelmed with political and health problems, killed himself. These two deaths allowed Boyer to become the only leader of Haiti. The North and the West were united to become one country. In Cap-Haïtien, in Saint-Marc, everywhere, people acclaimed Boyer as president of Haiti.

Boyer as President

Boyer ruled Haiti from 1818 to 1843. One of the main events that took place under his reign was the occupation of the Dominican Republic. The Dominican people got rid of the Spanish in 1814 but their departure left a void in the country. The political parties on the scene could not come up with a platform to satisfy the interests of the majority. Some political groups wanted the Spanish back in control, others demanded total independence. One political faction wanted to align itself with the country of Colombia while another group was fighting for the unification of Haiti and the Dominican Republic into one country. Boyer used this chaotic situation to his advantage. On February 9, 1822, he entered Santo Domingo. He invaded the eastern part of the island with an army of 20,000 men. From 1822 to 1843, the whole island was under Boyer's rule.

Boyer's administration faced a major concern. France wanted an exorbitant indemnity to compensate for their losses during the revolutionary war. Ever since the time of Christophe and Pétion, France had been applying pressure on the new nation to obtain some kind of reparation, but to no avail. Christophe even had a man by the name of Franco Medina executed for coming to the northern kingdom and trying to negotiate Haiti's independence. Unfortunately, Boyer was not as strong as Christophe. He agreed to pay 150 million francs to King Charles X and to grant French imports exemption from customs duties. History never forgave Boyer for this.

Christophe built many schools and Pétion founded Lycée de Port-au-Prince; but Boyer did not show much concern for education. He did not seem too interested to include young and competent people in his entourage. He was an autocrat. In addition, Boyer was prejudiced against his darker compatriots. He only had light-skinned people in key positions. His rural code bore an uncanny resemblance to the *Code Noir* with respect to working the land.

On May 7, 1842, a terrible earthquake shook Cap-Haitien, Santo Domingo, Santiago and Port-de-Paix. It caused a lot of damages. The city of Cap-Haïtien was completely destroyed. Boyer's political enemies took advantage of the situation to criticize his administration for their handling of this disaster. He was accused of doing very little to control or prevent the fire, the looting, and the general anarchy that ensued.

Rivière Hérard and some other politicians managed to organize an opposition against Boyer. Even members of his own army turned against him. It was a lost cause. Boyer fled to Jamaica. The Dominican Republic took advantage of the situation to declare its independence.

A Period of Collapse

A number of Heads of State succeeded Boyer: Soulouque, Géffrard, Salnave and others. In the meantime, the country's situation worsened. While the former generals were fighting for power, the English and the French were making huge amounts of profits in the exploitation of logwood, cocoa, coffee, and cotton. The United States, which imposed an embargo on Haiti since the time of independence, removed it in order to take advantage of Haiti's natural resources. It finally recognized Haiti's independence under President Géffrard in 1862. In 1915, however, the same United States compromised Haiti's independence by invading the country with a racist army.

THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION OF HAITI

On July 28, 1915, American soldiers landed in Port-au-Prince. They came supposedly to restore order, but that was not the whole story. In any case, they remained in the country for nineteen years (1915-1934).

From 1913 to 1915, Haiti had four presidents. It was a period of instability. At that time, someone did not become president through elections. It was the reign of the bayonets. The person with the most weapons and soldiers would march on Port-au-Prince, take over the palace, and install himself as president. In the language of the time, this was called a "revolution," and the soldiers were dubbed "revolutionaries."

The "revolutionaries" launched an attack against Vilbrun Guillaume Sam on July 27, 1915. He was the reigning president. His troops resisted briefly but were quickly overtaken by the opposition. Sam was shot in the leg and had to take refuge in the French Embassy.

In the meantime, one of Sam's generals, a man by the name of Charles Oscar, who was the military commander of the western region, ordered the massacre of all political prisoners being detained at the National Penitentiary. Port-au-Prince exploded. The people took to the streets and invaded the Dominican embassy, where Charles Oscar had taken refuge. He was shot three times by Edmond Polynice, a man who had lost three sons in the massacre. The crowd then dragged him into the streets and burned his body. The next day, the people invaded the French embassy. Sam was stabbed, his body was hacked into pieces, and dragged into the streets of Port-au-Prince. Some historians view these events as the cause of the American occupation of Haiti, but there are other reasons.

The Causes of the Occupation

The colonial powers never fully came to terms with the fact that Haiti, a small black country, was able to defeat Napoleon's army. The American government decided to make an example out of Haiti in applying the Monroe Doctrine. Its goal was to replace the French as the dominant influence in Haiti's affairs. The physical presence of their troops in the country gave the Americans the edge they needed to successfully compete with the Germans, the French, and the English, who had a monopoly on Haitian trade. Aside from these profound causes, there were internal circumstances that opened the way for the occupation. Let's name a few:

a) the assassination of Dessalines
b) the scission of the country into two separate states
c) Boyer's mismanagement of the country's economy
d) the squandering of the country's finances under Emperor Soulouque
e) the execution of Salnave
f) Haiti's situation as a bayonet republic
g) the rapid succession of short-lived governments
h) the assassination of Vilbrun Guillaume Sam

These events foretold the occupation. After the death of Dessalines, there was very little concern for nation-building. Haiti's political leaders were driven by the thirst for power. It was the struggle for power that opened the way for the occupation.

As soon as they arrived in Haiti, the Americans orchestrated a bogus election and installed a puppet president by the name of Sudre Dartiguenave. Admiral Caperton, who was heading the operation, took over the country's customs. A new constitution went into effect in 1918. The law that prevented foreigners from becoming property owners in Haiti was abolished. The Haitian army was disbanded and replaced by the *gendarmerie d'Haiti* which came under American control. The Haitian gold reserve was transferred from the National Bank to City Bank in New York. Speaking of the American occupation, Haitian poet Léon Laleau called it a shock. It was an event that shook the whole nation.

One of the most notorious figures of the occupation was General Russell. He took control over all three branches of the Haitian government. He practiced a racist policy that fostered division among Haitians. He got rid of all dark-skinned Haitians in administrative positions and replaced them with mulattoes. He disarmed the peasants and restored a practice called *Kove* which required the peasants to work six days for free during the year for the government.

Many intellectuals protested against the occupation. Their voices reached the United States, Latin America and Europe. The peasants, more specifically the Cacos in the North, rose up in arms. They were led by Charlemagne Péralte. The Americans finally managed to capture Péralte. They killed and crucified him like a black Jesus.

The resistance did not end with the death of Péralte. Benoit Batraville emerged as his successor but, in the end, he too was killed. According to Jacques Barros, the Americans killed 10,000 Haitians. As a result, they did not manage to rally anyone to their cause. The country's elite remained loyal to France. A large portion of the peasantry was openly hostile to their presence. Anti-American sentiments were growing as a result of the death of Charlemagne Péralte and the massacre at *Marchaterre*. The students from the agronomy school at Damien rose up against the occupation. Workers went on strike right and left. All these events created a very tense situation for Louis Borno, the Haitian President at the time. The U.S. President was forced to send the Forbes commission to Haiti to organize new elections. Stenio Vincent became the new president of Haiti. Vincent was the leader of a nationalist movement against the occupation. On August 21, 1934, president Vincent lowered the American flag from the Dessalines' barracks and raised the Haitian flag.

In spite of its many negative elements, the American occupation provided a positive contribution in some areas:

- hospitals were built
- a telephone system was installed
- sanitation services were improved
- an agronomy school was built in Damien
- a nursing school was inaugurated
- the department of public works was improved

The Americans also left behind Protestant missionaries whose mission was to counteract certain elements of popular culture, especially voodoo. They also left behind the Haitian army whose job was to keep in check anyone opposed to the good neighbor policy between Haiti and the United States.

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THE DUVALIER ERA

Haiti took a new direction when Francois Duvalier ascended to power on September 22, 1957. He established a dictorial regime with the blessings of Uncle Sam. This was the time of the cold war and the Cuban Revolution. Fidel Castro proclaimed Cuba a free territory in the Americas. This was a blow to the Americans. In order to stop the Cuban Revolution from spreading to other Caribbean countries, the United States decided to send money and weapons to governments in the region that opposed any kind of popular movement.

Duvalier used this political climate to his advantage. He branded everyone who was opposed to his regime a communist. He even used this slogan to curry favors from the American government: "Duvalier has no enemies; Duvalier's enemies are the communists." In order to carry out his witch hunt against communists, he relied on the help of a paramilitary force named the *Tonton Macoutes*. This group included thieves, criminals, and other thugs. Their mission was to establish a climate of terror in the country. This state of insecurity drove a sector of the population, which included much of the intelligentsia, to flee the country. This is how the phenomena of "exile" and "diaspora" began to take roots.

This exodus gave Duvalier enough elbow room to consolidate his dictatorial regime. Consequently, he named himself president for life in 1964. In protest, the United States suspended economic aid to Haiti; but they continued sending weapons to the military. This two-faced policy persisted until the death of Papa Doc in 1971.

Who was Papa Doc?

Papa Doc belonged to a group of intellectuals called *Les Griots*. The word comes from African literature. In Africa, a *griot* is an artist, a historian, a storyteller. The members of this literary group pretended to sing the praises of Africa, but in reality, they were a bunch of opportunists who used the notion of skin color to dupe the masses. When Elie Lescot, a mulatto president, was deposed in 1946, Duvalier made his entry into the political arena as minister of social affairs under President Estimé.

On May 10, 1950, Colonel Paul Magloire toppled Estimé and replaced him. Duvalier went into hiding, only to reappear in 1956 when Magloire was overthrown. This time, the army, under Colonel Antonio Kébreau's command, brought Duvalier to power in a rigged election. His followers called him Papa Doc because he was a doctor by profession. He worked alongside the Americans in a health program designed to eradicate a form of tropical skin disease in Haiti. In addition, Haitian chiefs of state often tried to project the image of a father or an uncle even though they might be dictatorial or cruel. Some of the more prominent names to be found in our history include Papa Dessalines, Papa Pétion, Tonton Nò and Papa Doc.

Papa Doc was obsessed with power. One of his favorite sayings was, "I have assumed power and I am here to stay." He also liked to brag about his supposed greatness. He used to describe himself as one of the great leaders of the Third World. At times, he would pretend to be a supernatural being who could not be seen or touched.

Papa Doc died in 1971 but, before his death, he named his son Jean-Claude, who was nineteen at the time, as his successor. Foreign journalists derided that decision. As a result, Jean-Claude became a comical character in this political theater. He was baptized Baby Doc.

Baby Doc's dream as president was to establish a less ferocious dictatorship without the inclusion of the Tonton Macoutes. His ideas seemed to conveniently coincide with the wishes of the American government. He created a new force called *The Leopards* to replace the macoutes. Uncle Sam applauded. The U.S. and the international community showered Baby Doc with money. According to Jacques Barros, a Frenchman living in Haiti at the time, there was a lot of money circulating in the country between 1978 and 1980. The international community had contributed 680,000,000 gourdes to Haiti's economy. All of this was to no avail. Baby Doc's cronies wasted all the money. Government ministers embezzled the funds to build their own castles and to open large accounts in Swiss banks. As a result, the country's situation worsened. Poverty and unemployment increased. The people were fed up and began to organize protests. Before long, Baby Doc had to go into exile.

February 7, 1986

It's impossible to talk about recent Haitian history without shedding some light on the date of February 7, 1986. That day did not just happen. It was the culmination of a long struggle led by Haitians, both in Haiti and the diaspora, to topple the Duvalier dynasty.

Grassroots church organizations inside the country known as *Ti Kominote Legliz* played an important role in making that day a reality. In conjunction with progressive elements of the clergy, they turned the gospel into a political weapon. It was out of this movement that Jean-Bertrand Aristide emerged.

Another important factor that precipitated that day was the independent press. Media organs such as *Radio Haiti*, *Le Petit Samedi Soir*, *Hebdo Jeune Presse* and *Fraternité* posed a serious threat to Baby Doc's regime. As a result, he expelled many of these journalists on November 28, 1980.

Playwrights also used the theater to express their discontent. Plays like *Pèlen Tèt* by Franck Etienne and *Debafre* by K-Plim exposed the corrupt nature of the dictatorship. In a reaction similar to his father's, Baby Doc closed down playhouses, arrested a number of actors and expelled some of the authors.

The diaspora played its role in bringing down the Duvalier dynasty. There were anti-government protests in New York, Washington, Boston, Miami, Montreal, Paris, etc. Haitians all over the diaspora were asking for Baby Doc's departure. This movement was also tied to the battle being fought on behalf of Haitian refugees. This situation alarmed the U.S. State Department to the point that they asked Jean-Claude Duvalier to leave the country.

Duvalierism Without Duvalier

When Jean-Claude Duvalier left office, there was a struggle for power. To begin with, there was the Provisional Government's National Council with the acornym K.N.G.P. in Haitian Creole. This body, which included Duvalierists, military officers and macoutes from the old regime, was headed by General Henry Namphy. Other members of the council such as Prosper Avril and Williams Regala were hard core Duvalierists. They were not interested in promoting democracy and the kind of political changes that the Haitian people were longing for after 1986. Their only objective was to hold on to power and to prolong Duvalierism without Duvalier. This is why they spoiled the presidential election that was set for November 28, 1987 by having armed thugs shoot at civilians who were waiting on line to vote.

After this massacre, the army lost its prestige in the eyes of the people and the international community. In order to control the damage, the military high command rushed to organize a bogus election whereby they made Leslie Manigat president. The people were not impressed. They ridiculed both the election and the president. The latter was nicknamed *Gwo Lesli* in reference to his size. Manigat did not last as president. He was deposed and Henri Namphy reclaimed the presidency.

In the meantime, the people were in the streets making their case: "No more macoutes." As a result, all the macoutes who acceded to power would fall one after another: Namphy, Manigat, Avril. Bazen, who aligned himself with the macoutes, lost the 1991 presidential election.

THE STRUGGLE FOR CHANGE AND DEMOCRACY

The person who saw clearly what was happening in the streets was Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a priest with close ties to grass-roots church organizations known as *Ti Legliz*. An avid supporter of liberation theology, he used his pulpit in St. Jean Bosco's Church in Port-au-Prince to motivate the people into action. He was dubbed "the prophet." In the presidential election that took place on December 16, 1990, he won by a landslide.

Jean-Bertrand Aristide as President

Jean-Bertrand Aristide was born in Port Salut on July 15, 1953. He completed primary school with the Salesians, and secondary school at Collège Notre Dame in Cap-Haïtien. During the years 1974-1975, he studied to become a priest in a Salesian novitiate in La Vega in the Dominican Republic. Upon his return to Haiti, he entered the seminary to pursue his theological studies. At the same time, he was studying psychology at the State University of Haiti. In 1976, he graduated as a psychologist. In 1979, he went to Israel to study theology. He returned to Haiti after a year. On February 3, 1980, he was ordained a priest by Bishop Romulus.

Priests usually use a pulpit to spread their message, but Jean-Bertrand Aristide would go wherever the political battle was being waged to make his voice heard. The people listened to him; they liked his message. As a result, he was chosen to be president with 67% of the votes.

The September 30, 1991 Coup d'Etat

The people who had brought Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power were rejoicing over his victory. However, the Duvalierists who were in control for thirty three years, felt very slighted. Some American officials did not look too favorably on the *Lavalas* movement. They saw it as being too nationalistic or even revolutionary in nature. During the cold war, they would have called it a communist movement. These forces were secretly conspiring against the *Lavalas* regime. On September 30, 1991, Jean-Bertrand Aristide was overthrown in a coup d'état. One of the most visible authors of this coup was General Raoul Cédras.

Three Years of Exile, Three Years of Mobilization

Normally, a president who was overthrown in a coup would go into exile and that would be the end of it. This, however, was a different ball game. The people had elected Aristide for five years, and they were determined to see him finish his mandate.

Reactions Against the Coup d'État

1. The international community condemned the coup. France, Canada, the United States and Venezuela all took position against the military. At the time, James Baker, who was Secretary of State under President Bush, referred to members of the military as pariahs.

2. The Organization of American States also protested against the coup. All of its members decided to impose an embargo on Haiti in order to force the military out.

3. In the diaspora, also known as *the tenth department*, Haitians in New York, Boston, Montreal, Miami, Paris, and other cities joined their voices in marches and demonstrations to demand the return of President Aristide to Haiti.

4. Inside Haiti, there was resistance against the military in spite of the brutal repression. FHRAP, a paramilitary force, committed many atrocities against followers of the deposed president. In the end, it took an American military intervention to restore President Aristide to power.

October 15, 1994

That date was not on the *Lavalas* movement's agenda. It was a result of the coup.

1. It was on that date that President Aristide returned to power. As soon as the United Nations had announced that date, there was a manhunt against prominent Aristide supporters. Antoine Izmery, Guy Malary and Father Jean-Marie Vincent were all assassinated. Others were arrested and tortured.

2. That date also marks the second occupation of Haiti. While it is true that the operation did not result in bloodshed or forced labor (*kòve*), people with nationalistic sentiments expressed their outrage at the fact that foreign troops had interfered in the internal affairs of the country.

   Other people see that date as resulting in a subtle form of blackmail. To them, the coup was orchestrated to stop some of the advances the Haitian people were beginning to make. It was designed to make Haitians accept what had already been rejected, e.g. occupation, economic reform, privatization.

Did Anything Good Come Out of October 15, 1994?

The American intervention resulted in a decrease in the number of atrocities being committed by the army and its paramilitary branch (FHRAP). It set an example for the future. The army would no longer use coup d'etats to negate the will of the people. It put an end to the embargo that was crippling the country's economy. It allowed for a democratic transition without bloodshed. It made it possible for Mr. René Préval to become the second *Lavalas* president of Haiti.

The Accomplishments of the Lavalas Movement

If one were to sum up the accomplishments of Jean-Bertrand Aristide and his Lavalas Movement, the results would depend on the person doing the evaluation. Both supporters and detractors of Mr. Aristide exude a lot of passion. Nonetheless, there were positive aspects of the Aristide government.

1. The government removed the barrier that separated the French and Creole languages. Today the two languages are used side by side at some official ceremonies. Mr. Aristide set the tone by being the first president to use Haitian Creole in his address to the United Nations in 1991.

2. The government restored freedom of speech and freedom of the press. People all over the country were engaged in political discourse and debates over the radio, on T.V. and in the newspapers.

3. The government created an office that dealt with issues concerning Haitians living outside of Haiti.

4. The government created an office that dealt with women's issues in order to advance the cause of women.

5. The government dissolved the army, that deadly institution that used to terrorize the people, especially men and women fighting for change.

6. The outgoing president was able to organize elections and transfer power to the new president without upheaval. It is the first time this happened in Haiti's history.

7. The government began to assume its sovereignty. It resumed diplomatic relations with Cuba in spite of pressures from the U.S. State Department.

There were some areas in which the *Lavalas* government fell short.

1. Power-sharing was limited to close friends, associates, and religious colleagues of President Aristide.

2. President Aristide relied too much on his popularity and his charisma at the expense of serious efforts to implement real change.

3. By embracing a policy of reconciliation, the government allowed many dishonest and subversive people to infiltrate its ranks.

4. The government did not move swiftly enough to administer justice to the people. As a result, some notorious criminals moved about freely, creating a climate of insecurity in the country.

René Préval as President

A presidential election took place in Haiti on December 17, 1995. This time, people did not go out in droves to vote as it happened on December 16, 1990. Of the 20% who voted, the majority chose René Préval as president.

Who is René Préval?

He is an agronomist, a progressive militant who spent much time in the diaspora. He lived in Belgium and in the United States. In 1991, he became Prime Minister under President Aristide. That was before the coup d'état. Aristide is often quoted as saying that he and Préval are twins because they are so much alike. It is true? Clearly, Préval has a different temperament. He is not as affable, as charismatic as Aristide. He seems more like a manager who would like to make some positive changes in the old administrative machinery.

Préval's Program

There are three main points to Préval's program: restoring state authority, agriculture and privatization. Restoring state authority means restoring order in all state institutions and make them accountable.

Another one of Mr. Préval's priorities is agriculture. Almost everyone agrees that Haiti will not progress if it cannot produce enough food for local consumption and for exportation. As an agronomist, Mr. Préval is well aware of this situation and wants to try his best to restore Haiti's reputation as an agricultural country.

President Préval found the Haitian economy in a state of bankruptcy. Corruption, patronage and nepotism were to a great extent responsible for this state of affairs. According to him, the only solution left is to privatize all the state enterprises that are not profitable. There is some opposition to this approach. Many people feel that pressures from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other major financial institutions are forcing Haiti to take this path. People who are against privatization remind us that countries that have gone down that road have become poorer while the international institutions have gained greater control over their resources.

Insecurity under Préval

After the coup d'etat of September 30, 1991, the Haitian army, the macoutes, and a terrorist organization known as FHRAP created a state of insecurity in the country. Armed thugs roamed the major populated areas in broad daylight and assassinated people for money or for political reasons. Antoine Izméry, Guy Malary, and Father Jean-Marie Vincent and many other nameless patriots fell victim to this state of insecurity.

This situation compelled the National Security Council of the United Nations to send a multinational force to Haiti to guarantee peace and security. The first group that came when President Aristide returned from exile was called MINUHA. Under Préval, they were replaced by MANUH. It was he who requested that the United Nations maintain its troops in Haiti since the new police force that replaced the army did not seem fully ready to assume its responsibilities. Some people regard these troops as an occupation army.

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HAITIAN CULTURE

THE HAITIAN LANGUAGE

Haitian Creole is the native language of the entire Haitian population. However, a very small percentage of that population is also able to express its communicative needs in French. But Haiti is neither a bilingual, nor a diglossic[1] country. It is a monolingual country in which all Haitians, whatever their social class, their level of education or the state of their material prosperity, speak and understand Haitian Creole.

Haitian Creole is a member of a relatively new family of languages called Creole that arose about four centuries ago from the European colonial expansion and the slave trade. Historically, these languages developed from the interaction of Europeans and West Africans during the period of colonization.

Haitian Creole is based lexically on French as are other Creoles spoken in the Caribbean islands of Martinique, Guadeloupe, St. Lucia, Dominica, in some areas in Trinidad, in French Guiana, in parts of Louisiana in the United States; and also in some islands of the Indian Ocean, namely Mauritius, Reunion, and Seychelles. There are other creole languages based lexically on English, Portuguese, and Spanish. Jamaican Creole is a very well known English-based Creole. All the creole languages share a great number of important grammatical similarities despite obvious vocabulary differences.

Haitian Creole is sometimes mistakenly thought of as an inferior version of French. Foreigners as well as some educated Haitians have been reluctant to accept it as a full-fledged language. For many years, French was recognized as the only official language of Haiti.

But over the last two decades, there has been a growing awareness among the Haitian population of the importance of the language in which they communicate and express themselves. In 1987, the constitution of Haiti recognized Creole as one of the two official languages of Haiti.

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[1] According to Charles A. Ferguson's classical definition, diglossia describes the strictly complementary use by a linguistic community of two highly differentiated varieties of the same language.

Educational researchers, linguists and sociolinguists have contributed heavily to this new awareness. For those who may be interested in Haitian Creole studies, there exists a literature dealing with multiple aspects of phonology, syntax or lexicon.

The Haitian Creole language has been described as a West African language with a French vocabulary. Many linguists find such a description a little simplistic. They agree in general that Haitian Creole has its own rules of syntax, semantics and phonology. More than six million Haitians speak it as their mother tongue. It possesses an official and largely accepted orthography. There is no doubt that a Haitian Creole literature will continue to grow throughout the years.

Haitians in New York constitute a strong community of more than half a million people. Haitian Creole is the third most common foreign language after Spanish and Chinese in the New York City public school system. From kindergarten to twelfth grade, many New York City schools have young Haitian Creole speakers. If they are not yet fluent in English, they are considered limited English proficient (LEP) children.

In addition to language differences, there are important cultural differences between Haitians and mainstream Americans. Understanding these linguistic and cultural differences would greatly benefit the teacher servicing young Haitian Creole speakers.

HAITIAN LITERATURE

Each people has its own literature. There are two kinds of literature: oral and written. In Haitian Creole, oral literature is referred to as *oralti* or *oralti*. Written literature is every word human beings in a society have managed to put on paper, it is every story they have enclosed in a book. Not every people has a written literature, but, in every society there is an oral literature or an *oraliti*. Oral literature exists by word of mouth. It is a literature human beings store in their heads. A people may have a part oral/part written literature. In the same vein, a people may only have an oral literature. But there is no country in the world where you only have a written literature.

It is true that Haiti became independent on January 1, 1804. But the history of the Haitian people began way before that, in Vertières, in Bois-Caiman, in Cibao, on the slave ships, in Africa. As a result, the literature of the Haitian people is deeply rooted in the land of Africa; it is intertwined with the chains found on the slaves aboard the slave ships. It is connected to the culture of the Taino and Carib Indians that lived on the island. If someone tells you Haitian literature began with Boisrond Tonnerre and Baron de Vastey, do not believe it. What about the moans of the slaves on the plantations? What about the songs of liberty of the maroons? What about the poems the aborigines used to compose?

Unfortunately, history did not retain much of the aborigines' or the slaves' literature. During the time of the Taino and Carib Indians, *sanbas* wrote beautiful poetry. Anacaona was the literary star of the Tainos. They admired her. Cacique Henri and Caonabo composed beautiful war songs.

During colonial times, a time of slavery, the slaves sang to lament their misery and to rejoice. They told riddles and stories about *Ginen*. In voodoo ceremonies, they sang of hope and freedom.

The colonists and the *affranchis* develope their own literature. Many of them had the opportunity to publish heir work. They published their own newspapers. They wrote on variety of topics. Gabriel Francois de Brueys d'Aigalliers was a poe who had a good reputation during colonial times. He used to glrify *Saint-Domingue* in his poems. Like another poet, Levaigneur, he denounced the treatment of the slaves at the hands of the masters.

THE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE OF THE QUISQUEYANS[1]

At the time the Tainos and the Caribs were living on the island of Quisqueya[2], they had their own literature. They were primarily interested in storytelling and poetry. Not much remains of this literature since it was primarily oral in nature. When Christopher Columbus and his companions landed on the island, they were not too interested in preserving anything related to the aborigines' culture.

In the language of the Quisqueyans, *sanba* meant poet or composer; *aretòs* meant poetry. The *sanbas* enjoyed creating beautiful poetry to sing about their misery, to lament their sorrow. On a few special occasions, the *sanbas* would rearrange the *aretòs* and turn them into beautiful plays complete with singing, poetry, and dancing.

One Quisqueyan poet stood out in the crowd. Her name was Anacaona. She was the queen of Yaguana (Léogane). According to some, she was the most beautiful woman on the island. Bartolome de Las Casas called her *La Grande Dame d' Ayiti*[3]. Anacaona wrote beautiful poetry. She had a gift for writing, and she loved improvising. Her songs were sung in every part of the island.

According to Suzanne Comhaire Sylvain, there are nine Haitian stories that are rooted in Quisqueyan culture. According to various authorities, some Haitian mores, customs and cultural practices are directly linked to Taino and Carib cultures.

What languages did the Caribs and Tainos speak? History tells us that at the time Christopher Columbus and his companions landed in *Haiti*, the inhabitants of the island were speaking two distinct languages: *Marcorix* and *Lucayo*. The Tainos primarily spoke Marcorix while the Caribs conversed in Lucayo. There were some regional differences in the Lucayo spoken by the Caribs on the various neighboring islands.

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1. We use the term Quisqueyan to refer to the Taino and Carib Indians who inhabited the island of Hispaniola.

2. Name given by the Indians to the island we now call Hispaniola.

3. The English translation is "The Grand lady of Haiti".

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There were more Tainos than Caribs on the island of Haiti. As a result, Marcorix was the predominant language spoken on the island. Some historians regard Marcorix as the national language of the island at the time the Spanish arrived there.

Some words from the Lucayo and Marcorix lexicon did not disappear. Some of them became part of French vocabulary, others made their way into Haitian Creole terminology.

Here are some Quisqueyan words and their meanings:

bityòs:	priest, medicine man
zemès:	Kiskeyan gods
aretòs:	songs, poems

Here are some words in the Quisqueyan languages that have become part of French or Haitian Creole vocabulary:

ouragan	(hurricane)
gayak	(type of wood)
woukou	(red dye)
gwayav	(guava)
banbou	(bamboo)
mabouya	(type of lizard)
bayakou	(someone who cleans latrines)
kwi	(vessel made from the calabash shell)
lanbi	(conch)
mayi	(corn)
kalbas	(calabash)
kowosòl	(soursop)
kanari	(clay recipient used to store water)
kachiman	(custard apple)
digo	(bleaching agent)
koukou	(owl)
makout	(straw sack)

There are some words that we use in Haitian Creole or French that have no exact equivalents in the language of the Caribs who lived on the various islands, such as:

zòtèy	(toes):	the foot's children
ven	(20):	all the fingers and all the toes
manton	(chin):	support for the teeth
pous	(thumb):	the father of the fingers

It seems that the island's inhabitants did not have a perfected orthography system with which to write the language they spoke. However, they used some symbols in order to preserve information that was important to them.

HAITIAN LITERATURE AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Historians who have studied Haitian literature have divided it into several periods or literary movements.

I. The First Period 1804-1836
The Pioneers' Period

II. The Second Period 1836-1890
The Romantic Period

III. The Third Period 1890-1915
The "Génération de la Ronde" Period

IV. The Fourth Period 1915-1945
The Indigenous Period

V. The Fifth Period 1945-
The Contemporary Period

THE FIRST PERIOD

The Pioneers' Period (1804-1836)

At the time the pioneers started writing drama, poetry and speeches, the country had just broken free from the chains of slavery. As a result, themes related to independence and liberty were at the core of this first period in Haitian literature. The pioneers were bent on condemning injustice and prejudice. They celebrated the notion of independence in their work. At the same time, they asked the enemies of the newly created country to stay away. The literature of the pioneer was also a literature based on partiality, on flattery. The majority of the writers of the time were the proteges of some potentate. They would write poetry to acclaim their benefactors. Nevertheless, they would occasionally criticize unethical conduct.

Poets

Antoine Dupré	(Antwàn Dipre)
Jules Solimes Milscent	(Jil Solim Milsan)
Juste Chanlatte	(Jis Chanlat)
Herard Dumesle	(Era Dimèl)
Francois Romain Lherisson	(Franswa Women Lerison)
Jean Baptiste Romane	(Jan Batis Womàn)

Prose-Writers

Boisrond Tonnere	(Bwawon Tonè)
Pompée Valentin Vastey	(Ponpe Valanten Vate)

Playwright

Antoine Dupré	(Antwàn Dipre)
Jules Solimes Milscent	(Jil Solim Milsan)
Juste Chanlatte	(Jis Chanlat)

Antoine Dupré (- 1816)

No one knows when Antoine Dupré was born, but from what history tells us, his mother gave birth to him in the city of Cap-Haïtien. In all likelihood, he studied in France. He also resided in England for a good amount of time. Antoine Dupré studied theater, but he was not a very good actor. He died in a duel on January 13, 1816.

Dupré wrote *Hymne à la Liberté* (Hymn to Liberty), *Le Rêve d'un Haïtien* (The Dream of a Haitian), *La Mort du Général Lamarre* (The Death of General Lamarre), *La Jeune Fille* (The Young Girl), *Miroir* (Mirror), but much of his writing was lost.

Hymn to Liberty

(by Antoine Dupré)

By the laws of nature,

All living things are born, they live, and they die.

The palm tree loses its verdure,

The lemon tree loses its fruits.

People are born, and they die.

But if they like freedom so much,

Shouldn't they come back to life

Someday?

Jules Solimes Milscent (1778-1842)

Jules Solimes Milscent's father was a Frenchman, his mother was a freed black woman. He was born in 1778. He completed much of his studies in France. He returned to Haiti in 1816. At the time, Pétion was president of the West, the East, and the South. Henri Christophe ruled the North. Jules Solimes Milscent was one of the founders of a bi-weekly magazine named "*Abeille Ayitienne*". The magazine dealt with literature but it also covered national news. When Boyer became president of Haiti, Jules Solimes Milscent was one of the people he selected to work on the Haitian Civil Code. Jules Solimes Milscent worked as a clerk in the Supreme Court of Haiti. He was also a deputy in parliament. In 1938, he became president of parliament. He died at the age of sixty-four in the earthquake that shook the City of Cap-Haïtien.

The Serpent and the Man

(by Jules Solimes Milscent)

One day a serpent crawled on its belly

To reach the top of a lofty rock.

A man, however, walking on his bare feet.

Was forced to take refuge in a cave.

The reptile, bursting with glory

To be so near the skies

Proclaimed victory over its rival

Teasing him for staying in such a low and somber place.

The man answered with a soft and proud voice,

Without chagrin, without anger:

"I would have reached a steep place, If I had crawled like you."

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THE SECOND PERIOD

The Romantic Period (1836-1890)

The romantic period should be divided into two parts. The first part (1836-1870) corresponds to the dawn of this literature. The second part (1870 -1890) covers the peak of its development.

First Part (1836-1870) - The School of 1836

The writers of this period did not want Haitian literature to be an imitation of what was happening in other countries. Nor did they want it to be an exercise in personality worship. The pioneers of this literary movement wanted Haitian writers to be familiar with other literatures, but not imitate them. They wanted to encourage a literature that reflected the country's reality, a literature rooted in the mores and beliefs of the Haitian people.

The romantic poets wrote about nature, love and melancholy.

Poets

Jean Baptiste Chenet	Jan Batis Chenè
Pierre Faubert	Pyè Fobè
Ignace Nau	Inyas No

Storytellers

Emile Nau	Emil No
Alibée Fery	Alibe Feri

Novelist

Emeric Bergeaud	Emrik Bèjo

Historians

Thomas Madiou	Toma Madyou
Beaubrun Ardoin	Bobren Adwen
Joseph Saint Rémy	Jozèf Sen Remi
Emile Nau	Emil No
Celigny Ardouin	Seliyi Adwen
Guy Joseph Bonnet	Gi Jozèf Bonè

Playwrights

Pierre Faubert	Pyè Fobè
Liautaud Ethéart	Lyoto Eteya
Alibée Féry	Alibe Feri

Ignace Nau (1808-1845)

Ignace Nau was born in 1808 in Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti. He completed part of his studies at a boarding school named *Institution Jonathas Granville*. This is where he also got his military training.

Thereafter, Ignace Nau went to continue his studies at a Catholic university in New York. When Ignace returned to Haiti, President Boyer appointed him as his special advisor. Later on, Boyer nominated him as his private secretary. In 1836, Ignace Nau formed a literary group with some of his friends. The group published their own magazine called *Le Républicain*. When the government shut down that magazine, the group published another one under a different name: *L'Union*. This particular magazine dealt with literary and commercial topics.

In 1938, after spending two years in France, Ignace Nau went to live on his plantation in *La Plaine du Cul-de-Sac* in Haiti.

Ignace Nau died in 1845. He was 37 years old.

Excerpt of a Story About the Revolution by Ignace Nau

This story has three parts: Celestine, Camp Pernier, Veillée. The following part is Celestine.

Celestine

This story took place in a hut at the foot of Morne Cadet. It was night. The whole family sat together: Grann Yaya, Celestine (Daughter of Grann Yaya), Michel (the son-in-law of Grann Yaya), a lieutenant in the indigenous army, and four children. All of a sudden, a captain appeared. He spoke on the side with Michel for a while, and then they both left for Camp Pernier.

Celestine became sad. When her husband left, she stood outside gazing. All of a sudden, there was a big boom. Something shaped like a beast appeared at the top of the mountain. It opened its wings and flew overhead while letting out bloodcurdling screeches. When Celestine told the news to the people in the house, they all got scared. They said it was a werewolf. Yaya got a hold of her holy water and her blessed palm. She traced a circle on the floor. She lit a fire inside of it, then threw incense and little branches of palm on the flame. She got hold of her rosary. Nobody in the house slept that night. In the morning, the evil spirit had disappeared. As a result, everyone was somewhat relieved. Afterwards, Celestine realized that her baby was wasting away. Celestine went looking for medicinal leaves to see if she could save the baby.

While she was on her way, she saw an old lady dressed in rags. Celestine felt pity for the old lady. She invited her to come to her house. As they arrived in front of the hut, the old lady's face changed completely. She became a young girl. She explained to Celestine that she was a member of the *Côte Bleue* society. She claimed to know the virtue of all medicinal plants. She promised to save the baby. In the meantime, the evil spirit had reappeared on top of the mountain. This led everyone to believe that the baby was afflicted with some kind of unnatural illness.

Second Part (1870-1890) - The Patriotic School

The second part of the Romantic Period corresponded to its culmination.

This period coincided with a time of civil war and political instability. It was also a time of economic stagnation. Trade and agricultural production were declining. Many people were living in misery. At the same time, certain powerful countries were applying pressure and threatening to invade Haiti to restore order. As a result, the literature of this period reflects the concerns of Haitian society of the time.

The writers would use their pens to denounce the prejudice of other countries and their attempts to exert control over Haiti's resources. Many of these writers were engaged in serious reflections about the country's problems and how to solve them. They were ready to fight in order to save the dignity of the country and its people.

Poets

Oswald Durand	Osval Diran
Charles Seguy-Villevaloix	Chal Segi Vilvalwa
Alcibiade Fleury Battier	Alsibyad Fleri Batye
Tertulien Guilbaud	Tètilyen Gilbo
Alibée Féry	Alibe Feri
Massillon Coicou	Masiyon Kwakou
Paul Lochard	Pòl Locha
Virginie Sampeur	Vijini Sanpè
Abel Elie	Abèl Eli
Aurel Chevry	Orèl Chevri
Edmond Heraux	Edmon Ewo
Ducas Hippolyte	Dika Ipolit
Arnold Laroche	Anòl Lawòch
MacDonald Alexandre	Makdonal Aleksann
Charles D. Williams	Chal D. Wilyams

Playwrights

Henry Chauvet	Anri Chovè
Massilon Coicou	Masiyon Kwakou

Theoreticians

Demesvar Delorme	Demesva Delòm
Louis Joseph Janvier	Lwi Jozèf Janvye
Anténor Firmin	Antenò Fimen
Solon Ménos	Solon Menòs
Hannibal Price	Anibal Prays

Novelists

Demesvar Delorme	Demesva Delòm
Massillon Coicou	Masiyon Kwakou
Louis Joseph Janvier	Lwi Jozèf Janvye

Orators

Hérard Dumesle	Era Dimèl
David Saint Preux	David Sen Pre
Dumai Lespinasse	Dime Lespinas
Armand Thoby	Aman Tobi
Boyer Bazelais	Bwaye Bazlè
Demesvar Delorme	Demesva Delòm

Oswald Durand (1840-1906)

Oswald Durand was a great poet, one of the greatest Haitian poets. He was born in the North, in the city of Cap-Haïtien. Oswald Durand did not have much formal schooling. He was about sixteen when he started making his living as a tinsmith. However, he was very interested in books. He loved to study by himself, but he also received some instruction from a teacher by the name of Francois Neckerner.

Oswald Durand was married to a poet named Virginie Sampeur. In 1864, Oswald Durand got a teaching job at the High School in Cap-Haïtien. Two years later, he was named Principal of the High School in Gonaïves. He collaborated with Demesvar Delorme in the publication of a newspaper called *L'Avenir*. In 1877, he published his own newspaper. He called it *L'Echo du Nord*. In 1878, he spent some time in prison for political reasons.

In 1885, under President Salomon, Oswald became a deputy in the Haitian Parliament. He was reelected six times by the people. In 1888, he became president of Parliament, much like Jules Solimes Milscent.

During his life, Oswald Durand visited France and the United States. He received a rousing welcome in those two countries.

When Oswald Durand first composed the poem *Choucoune*, he called it *Ti Pyè*. Later on, the name of the poem was changed to *Choucoune*. Oswald Durand wrote that poem for a woman from *La Plaine du Nord* whose name was Marie Noël Belizaire.

Mauleart Monton

It was Mauléart Monton who put *Choucoune*, a poem by Oswald Durand to music. Mauléart composed the song at the home of Eugène Vieux. Mauléart's father was Haitian, but his mother was American. Mauléart was born in New Orleans in the United States. He was taught music notation by Toureau Lechaud. Mauléart had a knowledge of medicine, but he was not interested in pursuing that career.

The first time Mauléart played *Choucoune* was at the national palace on the occasion of the anniversary of Salomon's presidency. Mauléart was dressed like a peasant. Mauléart Monton died on May 18, 1888.

Choucoune

by Oswald Durand

(excerpt)

Behind a big "pengwen"[1] bush
The other day I met Choucoune
She smiled when she saw me
I said "Wow, you're so beautiful"
She said "Is that so, dear?"
Only the birds were listening to us
When I remember this, I feel saddened
For since that day both my feet are chained
Choucoune is a "marabou"[2]
Her eyes shine like candles...

We went to her mother's house
An honest lady
As soon as she saw me, she said
"I really like this one!"
We drink nut-flavored chocolate
Is all this over, little birds in the woods
Might as well forget it, the sadder I am
The more my feet are chained since that day
The furniture had been made
A beautiful bed shaped like a boat
Tall chairs, a round table, rocking chair,
Two mattresses, one coat rack
Tablecloth, towels, muslin curtains
Only fifteen days were left...
Little birds in the woods, listen to me, listen
Everyone will understand why I am so sad
Why my feet are chained since that day
A white man came
Red beard, beautiful pink face
Watch on the side, beautiful hair
He is the cause of my misery

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[1] Kind of plant (Bromelia Pinguin).

[2] Person with black skin and silky hair.

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He found Choucoune pretty
He spoke French, Choucoune fell in love with him
Forget it little birds, it's too much sadness
Choucoune left me, both my feet are chained
The sad part in all this
What will surprise everyone
Is that I still love Choucoune
They will have a little quadroon
Little birds look at his little round belly
Peace, enough is enough, I am so sad
Both of Ti Pyè's feet are chained.

From the newspaper "*L'Oeil*", number 1, 5th year, May 10, 1884, according to Charles-Fernand Pressoir. Oswald composed this poem in a jail cell in 1883 in the city of Cap-Haïtien.

THE THIRD PERIOD

The "Génération de La Ronde" Period (1890-1915)

The writers of this period did not want Haitian literature reduced to a simple matter of coating things with a local varnish or painting beautiful Haitian landscapes. They felt that the literature should be concerned with subjects other than the exaltation of our ancestors. According to them, the writers should develop an interest in metaphysical issues, questions dealing with religion, life, and death. Accordingly, Etzer Vilaire called upon the Haitian writers to develop an eclectic literature, one based on the positive aspects of other literatures worldwide.

It was primarily the poets who followed along these lines. The novelists, however, had a different penchant. They were more interested in using the literature as a means to redress all the faults Haitians harbored within themselves. They envisioned a literature rooted in the country's reality both from the point of view of the language and the content.

The Eclectic School

Georges Sylvain	Jòj Silven
Etzer Vilaire	Etzè Vilè
Edmond Laforest	Edmon Laforè
Seymour Pradel	Semou Pradèl
Damocles Vieux	Damoklès Vye
Constantin Mayard	Konstanten Maya
Thimothée Paret	Timote Parèt

The National School

Novelists

Frederic Marcelin	Frederik Maslen
Fernand Hibbert	Fènan Ibè
Justin Lherisson	Jisten Lerison
Amédée Brun	Amede Bren

Playwrights

Vandenesse Ducasse	Vandenès Dikas
Charles Moravia	Chal Moravya

Historians, Social and Political Writers

Justin Devot	Jisten Devo
Hannibal Price	Anibal Prays
Stenio Vincent	Estenyo Vensan
Louis Borno	Lwi Bòno
Dantes Bellegarde	Dantès Bèlgad
Joseph Justin	Jozèf Jisten

Critics

Georges Sylvain	Jòj Silven
Frédéric Marcelin	Frederik Maslen
Pétion Jerôme	Petyon Jewòm

Georges Sylvain (1866 - 1925)

Georges Sylvain was born in 1866. At the time, his parents were living in Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic. Georges Sylvain completed primary school in a Catholic school run by brothers in Port-de-Paix.

He began secondary school in Petit Séminaire Collège Saint Martial. In 1880, he left for France to complete his studies at Stanislas College. While living in France, he became a lawyer. He also started writing. He published two poetry books (*Confidences et Mélancolies*) and a book of fables (*Cric Crac*).

In 1888, Georges returned to Haiti. He collaborated in the production of a magazine named *La Vérité*.

In 1894, he was named division chief for the Department of Public Instruction. In June of 1900, Georges Sylvain founded a society for the advancement of Haitian literature. He toured the country giving conferences here and there. Later on, he joined a group named *La Ronde*.

In 1901, he published an anthology of Haitian poetry. In 1909, Georges Sylvain became minister plenipotentiary of the Haitian government in France and at the Vatican.

In 1915, when the Americans occupied Haiti, he fought vigorously against the occupation. At that time, he founded a newspaper named *La Patrie*. It did not last. The Americans closed it down because they did not like the nature of its content.

Georges Sylvain spent the rest of his life fighting against the American occupation. Unfortunately, he died before the Marines left in 1934. He passed away on August 2, 1925. A big funeral was organized in his honor. Some people consider Sylvain to be a symbol of the resistance some Haitian intellectuals mounted against the American occupation.

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB

(by Georges Sylvain)

A cockroach can never be right in a dispute
With a chicken. My grandmother used to say
That often: Then, look and tell me
If the words of days gone by aren't the truth.
One day a puny little lamb
Was drinking water in the river.
Out of the woods a wild dog
Came to drink also
- One has never seen this kind of animal.
He was as big as a donkey
They use his name to refer to a werewolf.
At that point, the wolf had gone
Hungry for three days
His face was as pallid as
That of a person with colic
His mouth was dry as coffee
Drying in the sun, his teeth
Were so long! His eyes were as red as
A blaze! As a glutton he had
No equal. When he saw the little
Quiet, innocent animal
Leaned over drinking water
The wolf was so happy
He made the sign of the cross
And thanked God!
The worst kind of crook is the one
That puts on an honest face and
Uses the name of God in vain.
Before the lamb could even react,
The wolf lunged at him - Damn! Darn!...
Forgive me! Mighty one!

You know how people in positions
Of authority
Love to use these words
And the wolf, in the animal kingdom
At the very least holds the position of warrant officer
He said to the lamb
- "You fresh, insolent, little rascal
I saw you spit in the water I'm drinking
You're looking for trouble, aren't you?"
The lamb said: - "No, sir
Me spit in the water, not me sir
You're powerful, I am not.."
- Shut up! And, furthermore,
How dared you badmouth me last year?
"Me sir, I wasn't born last year"
- You mean I am lying? If it
Wasn't you, it was your father
Or your mother, you little rat.
- Chief, I don't have a mother or father
- How? - I am an illegitimate child
- Hey, you want to be a smart aleck
Look at you, you're not even
Teething yet and you're being fresh
To adults - Oh, my God
Today is not my day.
I didn't mean to offend you, sir.
- There is no sir here. I am sorry
General - You're chickening out.
Wait! At that point, the wolf
Jumped on the lamb
Bit him behind the neck
In a nice, fleshy part.
The poor little animal didn't have a chance.
The lamb fell to the ground
and the wolf devoured him in an instant.

MY HEART IS HEAVY

An Homage to Oswald Durand (1902)

(by Georges Sylvain)

Everyone has some degree of intelligence
We are all children of God.
But when it comes to
Telling riddles, there is no one
better than Oswald Durand...
I don't care if anyone is offended.
The reason, my brother, we have
A soft spot for you in our heart
Is that you never forget your friends.
The elders who are wiser than us
Often say: "The head is silver, the heart is gold."
Your head is good, your heart is better
My brother Oswald, what can we call
These times we're living now?
What a pity!
What misery!
People are dying on their feet
During the last five years.
There is a lot of infighting
In order to borrow money from the foreigners
So we can continue fighting each other
Without thinking about tomorrow,
About our country that is wasting away
Is that God's will for us?
Yesterday is not today
If only our ancestors:
Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion
Could come down from above
Wouldn't they grab us by the throat
And crush us like vermin?
This is too deep: my heart is heavy
Pray my brother; speak not!

THE FOURTH PERIOD

The Indigenous Period (1915-1950)

It was during the time of the American occupation that the indigenous movement developed in Haiti. It manifested itself as a reaction against the occupation. This literature reflects the ire of the intelligentsia against the occupation. This elite group felt offended that the Americans would occupy their country. They wanted to keep their culture intact, devoid of American influence. The indigenous writers

- refused to adopt American culture
- wrote many patriotic poems

Antonio Vieux used to criticize the *La Ronde* writers for encouraging a literature that tended to imitate rather than create. Vieux wanted the literature to reflect the aspirations and customs that were deeply rooted in Haitian folk songs, masses and dances.

In 1927, two publications: *La Revue Indigène* and *La Trouée* made their debut.

In 1938, some writers launched a literary movement named *Les Griots*. This group wanted Haitian writers to give African culture its long overdue place in Haitian literature. They were encouraged not be ashamed of the African heritage that permeates Haitian culture and to defend African culture in their writings. They were asked to incorporate elements of Haitian customs, mores, and culture into their writings.

Poets

Emile Roumer	Emil Woumè
Carl Brouard	Kal Bwa
Jacques Roumain	Jak Woumen
Philippe Thoby Marcelin	Filip Tobi Maslen
Roussan Camille	Wousan Kamiy
Jean Brierre	Jan Briyè
Regnor Bernard	Reyò Bèna
Léon Laleau	Leyon Lalo

Novelists

Jacques Stephen Alexis	Jak Stefèn Aleksi
Jacques Roumain	Jak Woumen
Jean Baptiste Cinéas	Jan Batis Sineyas
Pierre Marcelin	Pyè Maslen
Edris St. Armand	Edris Sentaman
Félix Morisseau-Leroy	Feliks Moriso Lewa
Roland Luc Grimard	Wolan Lik Grima
Louis Henry Durand	Lwi Anri Diran
Raymond Chassagne	Remon Chasay

Playwrights

Dominique Hyppolite	Dominik Ipolit
Jean Brierre	Jan Briyè
Marcel Dauphin	Masèl Dofen
Léon Laleau	Leyon Lalo

Historians

Pauléus Sanon	Poleyis Sanon
General Nemours	Jeneral Nemou
Dantès Bellegarde	Dantès Bèlgad
Dr. J.C. Dorsainville	Doktè J.K. Dòsenvil
Jean Fouchard	Jan Foucha
Dr. Jean Price Mars	Doktè Jan Prays Mas

Theoreticians

Dr. Jean Price Mars	Doktè Jan Prays Mas
Dantès Bellegarde	Dantès Bèlgad
Dr. J.C. Dorsainville	Doktè J. Dòsenvil
Lorimer Denis	Lorimè Deni
Dr. Francois Duvalier	Doktè Franswa Divalye
Klébert Georges Jacob	Klebè Jòj Jakòb

Carl Brouard (1902 - 1965)

Carl Brouard was born in Port-au-Prince on December 5, 1902. His father was a shopkeeper. He had a store named *Aux Armes de Paris*. Raphael Brouard, the father of Carl Brouard was mayor of Port-au-Prince under President Vincent. As a child, Carl Brouard attended Erima Guignard's primary school. He also went to College Saint Martial and College Catts Pressoir. Carl Bouard really loved to read. He wrote for two newspapers: *La Trouée* and *Revue Indigène*.

Carl Brouard was interested in voodoo. In 1938, he started a magazine, *Les Griots,* with Lorimer Denis, Francois Duvalier, and Clément Magloire. In 1962, the Haitian government decorated Carl Brouard. On November 27, 1965, he was found dead lying in a gutter. He had left behind two daughters. On December 5, 1970, a monument was inaugurated in Carl Brouard's honor and a plaza was named after him. Huberman Normil Charles is the sculptor who carved his statue.

Antilles

(by Carl Brouard)

Countries of charm, Antilles of sapphire
Martinique, Turks and Caicos Islands, The Grenadines,
Haiti
Melodious names that sound
Like nuggets of gold
And rock slowly like a hammock.
Antilles! Antilles of gold
You are aromatic bouquets
The trade winds rock in the sea
Islands of sapphire
Where the moon showers
The palm trees with silver
While the rhythm of a drum
Resounds far, far away.

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THE FIFTH PERIOD

The Contemporary Period (1945 -)

The contemporary period of Haitian literature began with the end of the second World War. The writers of this period delved deeply into issues such as repression, racial prejudice, exploitation. Many of them denounced these wrongs in their writings. They turned literature into a weapon in their fight to change society.

In 1945, René Dépestre published *Etincelles*. He was only nineteen. He founded *La Ruche*. This magazine dealt extensively with political issues. As a result, the Lescot government closed it down. This led to a general strike which resulted in the fall of Lescot from power.

In 1960, some poets got together to form a new literary group. They called it *Samba*. This group did not last. They published only two books: *Saison des Hommes* by René Philoctète and *Eté* by Anthony Phelps. Later on, these writers regrouped to form *Haiti Littéraire*. They produced a new literary magazine called *Semences*. In the same year, other writers created a literary group named *Hounguenikon*. Here are the names of the people who belonged to this latest group: Serge Baguidy-Gilbert, Serge St. Jean, Armand Adolphe, Jean Max Calvin, Phito Gracia, Roger Th. Aubourg, Jacqueline Beaugé, Edy Guéry.

In 1965, Frank Etienne and René Philoctète began a new literary movement called *Spiralisme*, and in 1973, Gérard Dougé introduced a literary movement named *Plurealisme*.

In 1960, Dieudonné Fardin began a literary movement called *Régénération du Nord d'Ouest*. It included people like Eddy B. Pierre, Herard Jadotte, Théodore Achille and Cauvin L. Paul.

Around 1979-1980, a group of young poets like Ady Jean Gardy launched a new orientation in Haitian literature. They called it *Mulâtrisme culturel*.

HAITIAN LITERATURE IN CREOLE

Natif Natal Literature

A good number of authors are writing in Haitian Creole these days. Some newspapers have a Creole section. A few of them are entirely in Creole. If we took our time to look, we would find poems, plays, novels, narratives about religion, politics, agriculture and medicine that are written in the Haitian mother tongue. What we are now observing is a movement in the *natif natal* literature that began in the fifties. Nowadays, the movement is gaining momentum; it is growing. This effort really began to show progress in the seventies as a result of the work of many Haitian and foreign intellectuals and the advances that were being made in other Creole-speaking countries. We also need to concede that the climate of fear, repression, and censorship that prevailed in the country constituted a barrier to the development and growth of the *natif natal* literature.

Since 1986, the Haitian people have resolved not to be the perennial losers in the political arena. As a result, they have created a climate where liberty, democracy, and participation are beginning to take hold in the country. The *natif natal* literature can benefit from this situation. The 1987 constitution recognizes Haitian Creole as one of the official languages of the country. In 1979, the Haitian parliament passed a law authorizing the use of Haitian Creole as a language of instruction. Haitian Creole has permeated every aspect of the country's political life. This is only the beginning; more work remains to be done.

When we look at the various movements in the history of Haitian literature, they seem to lead naturally to the latest developments we are witnessing today. After many Haitian writers have decided to stop imitating French literature, after they have decided to refrain from producing a literature that ignores the country's reality, a literature that is more interested in what is happening in France, after they have decided to make Haitian literature more authentic, more representative of the country's reality, one could foresee further changes coming. One could sense there was another step to climb. As the saying goes: "As you change your master, you change your trade." The Haitian writers could not continue to paint Haitian scenes using a foreign brush. They realized that in order to paint a good Haitian tableau, they needed a local brush. Thus, a *natif natal* literature required the use of the native tongue.

This literary movement turned its back on the practice of speaking Creole and writing in French. It rejected the practice of writing in a language most people in the country did not understand. In the same vein, most of the writers belonging to this movement use their pens as a weapon to combat injustice, poverty and repression.

When did Haitian writers begin writing in Creole? When did the *natif natal* literature begin?

The practice of writing in Creole began in colonial times, when our ancestors where the slaves of French masters. At the time, it was primarily the colonists who wrote in Creole. Historians tell us there were plays and songs written in Haitian Creole during that time. Most of these literary pieces have been lost.

Moreau de Saint-Méry mentions a song entitled *Lisette Quité La Plaine* that was written by Duvivier de la Mahautière in 1750. There is another song that tells the story of a Taino slave named Aza who was reunited with his girlfriend Evahim in Les Cayes. The dialogue between Evahim and Aza inspired E. Descourtilz into writing a song entitled *Chanson d'Evahim et Aza*. Every period of Haitian literature gave rise to writers who would write pieces here and there in Haitian Creole, especially poetry.

There is the oral literature also. It has always existed. It exists by word of mouth. It does not wait for intellectuals to invent a writing system in order for it to develop. It never lets the language get ahead of it; they walk side by side. The Haitian oral literature began with the birth of the Creole language itself. It started with the moans of the slaves on the plantations. It encompassed the songs they sang to express their misery, their hopes, their dreams; it embraced the stories they told after the sun went down, the songs they sang during voodoo ceremonies. The oral literature of Haiti is present in the oath of Bois-Caïman, the oath of Boukman, in the war chant, *Grenadye Alaso*, in Dessalines' Independence Day Speech, in masses that have been celebrated in Creole since 1966. This literature runs across the whole history of the Haitian people. Today, the oral literature of Haiti can be found in the jokes, the stories, the proverbs, the songs of *konbit*, the songs of *rara*, the voodoo songs, the folk songs, the popular songs. It is the expression of people's beliefs, their thoughts, their likes, their dislikes, their way of seeing life, death and nature. It is in this literature that the hopes of the Haitian people lay dormant; it is in this literature that their misery finds an outlet.

Imaginary Interview with Félix Morisseau Leroy

by Menès Dejoie

J. Laguerre: Welcome!

F.M. Leroy: Greetings

Laguerre: Cauvin Paul gave you a name. He called you a poet *legba* in the *natif natal* literature of Haiti... He compared you to Malherbe. Do you realize why he gave you these names?

Leroy: Yes, I do... It is I who opened the gate for the *natif natal* literature of Haiti in 1954. Some people were saying that Haitian Creole is not a language, that it does not have a grammar... I wanted to prove them wrong. It was the first time that a writer was opening the gate to let the *natif natal* literature through. Before that, there were people like Oswald Durand, Georges Sylvain, Emile Roumer. They opened the gate a little bit. However, when I came on the scene, I opened it all the way. I wanted people to swallow their words.

Laguerre: Tell us about yourself. What part of Haiti are you from?

Leroy: I am from La Vallée ... Jacmel. I was born on March 13, 1912.

Laguerre: You've reached your golden years.

Leroy: Yes, I am 81 years old. I've seen many events go by. Life has taken me to many parts of the globe. I've had my share of difficulties. I've spent time in Africa. I've lived in the United States, Jamaica, Canada.

Laguerre: Did you leave Haiti of your own free will in 1959?

Leroy: No... I was being persecuted by the Duvalier government. I was on their black list. I did not want to collaborate with dictators. In 1959, I had to leave the country in order to go to live in Africa. I spent three months in Nigeria, seven years in Ghana, thirteen years in Senegal. I've been living in the United States, more precisely in Miami, since 1980.

Laguerre: But 1959 was not the first time you got in trouble with the authorities.

Leroy: It's true. I was arrested thirty times in the interval of a month and a half during the American occupation in 1929.

Laguerre: You were only seventeen?

Leroy: Yes, but there is no set age to begin fighting... I took to the streets with the students of Jacmel in solidarity with the students of Damien in Port-au-Prince.

Laguerre: What have you written in Haitian Creole?

Leroy: I have written *Djakout* I, II, III, IV, *Antigòn, Wa Kreyon, Jaden Kreyòl, Ravinodyab, Bouki ak Malis nan Nouyòk.*

Laguerre: Thanks a lot. It was a pleasure for me to have this talk with you. I hope you live a very long life. I also hope you continue to produce more work for the *natif natal* literature.

Skit about Georges Castera

by Menès Dejoie

- (Knock, knock, knock.) Hello?

  (a voice answers)
- Hello. Who are you?
- It's me.
- Who are you?
- It's me as foolhardy as ever.
- Who are you?
- It's me, man of Haiti ... Haiti Thomas[1]
- I ride my horse backward whenever I please.
- But who are you?
- I've just broken the chain that had me speaking Creole and writing French ... I know how to play tag with words, I speak to all the trees in nature. I have great conversations with all the creatures of the sea.
- What brings you here?
- I have come to plead the cause of men and women tied with the knot of poverty.
- When were you born?
- You are *Antwàn lan gonmye*.[2] You know when I was born, you know when I will die.
- You were born in thirty-six, right?
- You knew, why did you ask me?
- You are belligerent. You've been all over the place. You were in Spain. But, where is your scalpel ... Where is your stethoscope?
- A man can father a child, but that does not mean he can choose his child's profession. Since I was little, poetry laid claim on me.
- Listen, do you know that around here what comes in does not come out?
- Poetry is like smoke; it comes in and out wherever it pleases. A poet has the power to disappear... A poet is a like shadow, now you see it, now you don't.

---

[1] Last name commonly given to Haiti in songs and poetry.

[2] Character often referred to in Haitian proverbs. He has the power to predict the future.

- Are you defying me? What was your business with the Brothers of Saint Louis de Gonzague?
- That's where my father sent me to school. Listen, when are you going to take your foot off the poor man's chest.
- Don't ask me any questions.
- When are you going to stop sucking the blood of workers?
- Stop being so inquisitive.
- When will you declare a state of justice for everyone?
- Don't ask me any questions. Remember what I told you before: "Around here what comes in does not come out".
- You're kidding yourself. I have *Konbèlann, Bisuit Leta, Pye pou Pye, Trip Fonmi, Pwezi Se Gate Priyè, Pwezi Se Maji.* I am leaving, catch me if you can.

HAITIAN MUSIC

"The Haitian people love to sing, and they love to dance". This is something that foreigners who visit Haiti like to repeat. It seems to be the truth because, when the peasant plows the earth, he seems to find his strength in songs. The street vendors always have a song on their lips when they peddle their wares. When a man loves a woman, he will often reveal his feelings for her through a serenade. Feuding neighbors exchange invectives through songs. In voodoo ceremonies, Haitians use drums and maracas. They play lively songs at their masses, and they tell stories filled with songs and dances.

Musicologists believe that voodoo music is the truly indigenous music of the Haitian people. During the time of slavery, the masters would select certain slaves to be taught European music. The *affranchis* loved polka and quadrille. For the majority of the slaves, however, their only music was voodoo music. The slaves came from different tribes, and the masters were always careful not to have individuals from the same tribe on the same plantation. As a result, the roots of voodoo and voodoo music are dispersed in different parts of Africa. We could say that Saint-Domingue was the crossroad where several rhythms from various African tribes met to produce Haitian voodoo music (*yanvalou, kongo, petwo, djouba, nago, ibo,* etc.)[1]

Harsh living conditions, poverty and repression have turned Haitians into a migratory people. As a result, they have become acquainted with different kinds of music which they fuse with voodoo music to create the various trends in Haitian music.

There is a kind of music that developed in Haiti as a result of the back and forth migration of Haitians between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and other Latin American countries. This kind of music, where the guitar is prevalent, is called *mizik twoubadou*, *mizik anba tonèl*. In 1955, Haitians began using a Dominican rhythm called *tipico*. They played it at a slower tempo, and they named it *Konpa Dirèk*.

According to many, Nemours Jean-Baptiste is the creator of the *Konpa Dirèk* rhythm. He put together a band named *Ensemble Nemours Jean-Baptiste*. This band helped to establish *Konpa Dirèk* as a popular rhythm in Haitian music. At the time, there was a fierce competition between Nemours' band and that of Webert Sicot. The latter changed the *Konpa Dirèk* rhythm slightly and called it *Kadans Ranpa*. Another

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[1] The words in parentheses refer to various voodoo rhythms

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big band of the time was *Jazz des Jeunes.* Their music reflected the variety of Haitian rhythms such as *petwo, ibo, yanvalou, afwo*, etc.

Later on, Haitians made some changes in the way *Konpa Dirèk* was played. They reduced the number of musicians, eliminated the wind section of the band, and gave the electric guitar a prominent role in the music. It's these changes that gave rise to *mini djaz* such as *Tabou Combo, Shleu Shleu, Les Fantaisites,* etc. Today, the *mini djaz* bands are looking for a new way of playing *konpa dirèk*. They call their music *Nouvèl Jenerasyon*. Some of the bands associated with this movement are *Zen, Fantòm, Lakòl, Riske, Papach, Zenglen*, etc.

In spite of all these trends, voodoo music has remained steadfast. It has influenced Haitian classical music. Haitian classical musicians such as Frantz Casséus, Amos Coulanges, Marc Mathelier offer their renditions of Haitian folk music on the classical guitar. In the same vein, we find some Haitian musicians who have either composed original classical music or interpreted foreign classical music. Let's mention some classical pieces written by Haitians:

Papillons Noirs (Ludovic Lamothe)
Lòt bò dlo (Claude Dauphin)
Mazoumbèl (Edouard Wooley)
Les Chants de La Montagne (Justin Elie)
Les Complaintes Haïtiennes (Werner Jaegerhuber)
Nuits sous les Tonnelles d'Haïti (Carmen Brouard)

Voodoo music is of interest to non-Haitian musicians as well. It has influenced American jazz. A man like Elvin Jones has studied Haitian master drummer Ti Wowo extensively.

Since *Vatican II*, the drum has made its way into the church in Haiti. As a result, most church songs today reflect the influence of the various voodoo rhythms.

For a few years now, a new movement has been emerging in Haitian music. It is called *mizik rasin* or "roots music". Proponents of that movement believe that voodoo music in its purest form should be the essence of Haitian music, whether for dancing or not. Here are the names of some "roots music" bands: *Boukmann Eksperyans, Boukan Ginen, Sanba, Rara Machin, Foula, Sa, Djakout, Ram,* etc.

HAITIAN INSTRUMENTS

Idiophones (Instruments that are shaken)

Tchatcha

It's a Haitian musical instrument. They remove the insides of a calabash and fill its empty shell with grains of corn or millet, sand or pebbles. A wooden handle is inserted through a hole in the shell. The *tchatcha* is used in music, in voodoo ceremonies, in healing rituals.

Graj

The *graj* is made with a piece of tin that has been pierced with a bunch of little holes. The musician uses a metal rod to play the *graj*.

Membranophones (Instruments that are struck)

Tanbou

The *tanbou* is the backbone of Haitian music. It is made with animal skin, and different *tanbous* have various functions.

Aerophones (Instruments that are blown into, wind instruments)

Klewon

The *klewon* is made of tin. It has a conical shape. It has a mouthpiece allowing the player to blow into it.

Lanbi

The *lanbi* is found in the sea. During colonial times, the slaves communicated with one another using the *lanbi*. We use it to address *Mèt Agwe**, to summon a gathering. Haitians also use it as a musical instrument.

Cordophones (String Instruments)

Banza

It's a four-string guitar with a deep sound that is used in accompaniments. This instrument is almost extinct.

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*Voodoo god of the Sea

HAITIAN MUSICIANS

LUDOVIC LAMONTHE (1882-1953)

Ludovic Lamothe is the son of Virginie Sampeur, the first Haitian woman poet, and Doctor Tacite Lamothe. He was born on May 12, 1882. Music was the preferred form of entertainment in the Lamothe's household.

Ludovic's father was quite skillful at the piano. His grandfather was no slouch at the violin. Virginie Sampeur used to teach him piano and music notation. Ludovic Lamothe was in France when the Americans invaded Haiti. That news disturbed him a great deal. A Russian cellist referred to him as a "Black Chopin".

Ludovic Lamothe wrote some classical pieces such as *La Dangereuse* and *Papillons Noirs*.

LUMANE CASIMIR

Koralen wrote a beautiful poem in honor of Lumane Casimir, a star of Haitian popular music. Lumane could sing and play the guitar. She was born in Dubédou, a little town near Saint-Marc.

During the 1949 expo in Bicentenaire, Lumane sang many Haitian folk songs. She wrote a song called *Limàn pa bèl fanm* (Lumane is not a beautiful woman) in 1947.

Lumane died in poverty in the Deschapelles hospital.

RODOLPHE LEGROS

Rodolphe Legros is a very popular Haitian singer. He was born in 1913. He was given the nickname *Dòdòf*. Some of the most popular songs he sang include *Manman Nanotte, Maria, Confiance, Trois Feuilles, Renmen, Troubadour and Marabout de mon Coeur*.

OTHELLO BAYARD

Othello Bayard was born in Les Cayes. He was an accomplished violinist. He gave many concerts in the town of Jérémie. What Haitians remember Othello most fondly for is a song named *Haïti Chérie*. It was he who put the words of that song to an already existing melody.

HAITIAN PAINTING

Painting plays an important role in the life of the Haitian people. From time to time, experts in the field visit Haiti to do research on Haitian painting. Many of these specialists believe that Haitian painting is very original. In Port-au-Prince, there are a good number of art galleries. Some cities outside of Port-au-Prince have their own art galleries.

At the market (*mache anfè, site lespozisyon*), in the streets, Haitian artists display their beautiful paintings to be sold to both Haitian and foreign tourists. Haitian artists love to decorate *taptaps*[1]; they paint beautiful murals to beautify public places such as parks and markets.

The history of Haitian painting begins with independence. People who visited *Palais de Sans-Souci* when Henri Christophe was king reported seeing beautiful paintings decorating various rooms in the palace. King Christophe was a patron of the arts, and he had many artists working at his behest. However, it was Rechinval who was the resident artist of the royal court.

In 1916, Richard Evans, an English painter, opened a school to teach painting and drawing in *Sans-Souci*. There was also a Haitian artist we only know by the name of *Charles* who was in charge of *L'Académie Royale de la Peinture*.

Towards the end of 1816, President Pétion sent for a French painter by the name of *Barincou*. He charged him with the task of painting the portraits of various Haitian independence heroes. These portraits later served to decorate the main room in the national palace.

As for *Denis*, he presented portraits of four Haitian generals to president Pétion in 1819. During Pétion's reign, Barincou opened an art school to teach painting and drawing. Thereafter, Charles Hardy opened his own art school. He told the story of president Boyer's funeral in eight paintings. Barincou continued working under president Boyer; he painted two portraits of him. Barincou left Haiti in 1829. Before he left, he did a beautiful painting which he dedicated to the Haitian army (*Le Serment Haïtien*).

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[1] Decorated pick-up trucks fitted with benches and rooves. They are used for public transportation in Haiti.

By the time Barincou left Haiti, there were a good number of painters in the country. However, many art critics recognize Thimoléon Déjoie as the greatest Haitian painter of the nineteenth century. One of his paintings is called *Assomption*, but many people believe that his best work is a painting showing Pétion and his generals entering Cap-Haïtien.

In 1961, president Géffrard opened a painting academy in Port-au-Prince. According to some writers, nineteenth century Haitian artists used to portray Jesus, the Holy Family, the Virgin Mary as black people. It seems that Soulouque asked an artist to paint a black Jesus for him. Edward B. Underhill reported to have seen a painting in the cathedral in Port-au-Prince depicting a black Virgin (*Assomption de la Vierge*).

Edmond Goldman received a prize for a painting entitled *La Découverte de l'Amérique*.

Haitian painters who made their marks during the early part of the twentieth century include: Georges Ramponeau, Edouard Preston, Antonio Puzo, Léon Agnant, Antoine Derenoncourt, Michelet Giordani, Cesar Muller, René Vincent, etc.

In February 1943, Dewitt Clinton Peters went to Haiti to teach English at the secondary level. In August 1943, Peters changed his mind. He gave up teaching so that he could open an art center. The center was officially opened on May 14, 1944 in the presence of Elie Lescot. As soon as the center opened, Peters started to offer painting classes and to organize art exhibits. Later on, he opened another branch of his center in Cap-Haïtien. In 1947, president Estimé decorated Peters for his efforts to promote Haitian art. Peter's Art Center played an important role in the establishment of the *Musée d'Art Haïtien du Collège St. Pierre* which opened on May 11, 1972. Sometime later, some Haitian painters left the *Centre d'Art* in order to open *Foyer des Arts Plastiques*.

Some art critics divide Haitian painters into two groups: modern and *naïf* painters. The modern painters are the ones who have received some academic training in painting, while the *naïf* painters have had no formal training in their craft.

Here are some painters from each group:

Modern Painters

Gesner Armand (Jesnè Aman)
Karl Auguste (Kal Ogis)
Jacques Enguerrand Gourgue (Jak Angeran Goug)
Lyonel Laurenceau (Lyonèl Loranso)
Favrange Valcin II (Favranj Valsen II)
Bernard Wah (Bèna Wa)

Naïf Painters

Hector Hyppolite (Ektò Ipolit)
Philomé Obin (Filome Oben)
Gavé Toussaint (Gave Tousen)
Pierre Joseph Valcin (Pyè Jozèf Valsen)
Michel D. Francois (Michèl D. Franswa)
Félix Jean (Feliks Jan)
Jean Jacques Guillaume (Jan Jak Giyòm)

Haitian artists have depicted a variety of local themes in their paintings including: Haitian history, the Catholic religion, *konbit*[1], the market place, cockfighting, peasant's weddings, carnivals, birds, children, *rara*[2], voodoo ceremonies, etc.

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[1] Collective farm work.

[2] Rural Mardi Gras.

PROFILE OF SOME HAITIAN PAINTERS

HECTOR HYPPOLITE

Hector Hyppolite (*Ektò Ipolit*) is a popular Haitian artist. He was born in Saint-Marc on September 16, 1894. He began working as an apprentice shoemaker.

His father was a voodoo priest and his mother a priestess. He did not know how to read nor write. He was a devout voodoo practitioner. In 1945, he moved to Port-au-Prince. In 1947, his paintings enjoyed a great deal of success at an exhibit in Paris. André Breton, a renowned French writer, fell in love with his work.

JEAN-JACQUES FOUGÈRE AUDUBON

Jean-Jacques Fougère Audubon (*Jan Jak Foujè Odibon*) spent almost all his life in France. He was born in Haiti in 1785. His mother was Haitian; his father was French. When his mother died in 1789, his father decided to move to France with him. That's where he studied drawing under the tutelage of an artist named Louis David. Audubon became a renowned artist. He was an ornithologist and loved to paint birds.

GEORGE REMPONEAU

George Remponeau (*Jòj Ranpono*) was born on September 16, 1916, one year after the American occupation of Haiti. He began to draw as a little boy. He was taught by Pétion Savain.

George Remponeau was an extremely talented artist. He could draw, paint and illustrate books. Some of his drawings appear on stamps. In 1939, Remponeau won a medal in New York for a painting he called *Machann Kokoye*. It was he who drew the mural decorating the restaurant *Aux Casaques* in Port-au-Prince. George had an aunt who could draw but she was ill. She would occupy George's time by giving him a big piece of paper so he could draw. Until the age of seven, George would draw upside down on a page. That would worry his relatives who thought there was something wrong with his brain.

In order to further the cause of Haitian painting, George opened a free art school to teach children how to paint (*Musée des Beaux Arts*). Many of his students became well-known artists.

HAITIAN CINEMA

It was during Antoine Simon's presidency that Haitians in Port-au-Prince went to the movies for the first time. Many people filled up a room in Petit Séminaire College St. Martial in order to see the first movie that was produced in France. Thereafter, a Frenchman by the name of Fellipi came to Haiti to produce a movie entitled *Incendie à Port-au-Prince*.

However, it took Haitians many years before they delved into the art of filmmaking. It took sixty-seven years after Louis Lumière invented cinema for them to really try their hands at filmmaking.

In 1962, Jean Dominique produced a documentary on Haiti and called it *Et moi je suis belle*. This documentary was made to honor Haitian women.

Thereafter, Bob Lemoine produced *Olivia*, a movie that depicts the trials and tribulations of a poor peasant woman who moved to Port-au-Prince.

As for Rasoul Labuchin, he produced *Anita* and *Jou m an Kòlè.*

Ou vas-tu Haiti? is another Haitian movie that was produced by a film-maker named Bonè. Raphael Stein was the author of a movie entitled *M ap Pale Nèt*.

Arnold Antonin is a Haitian filmmaker who produced numerous movies such as: *Ayiti, men Chimen Libète, Yon Nayif nan Peyi Kout Baton, Èske yon Tonton Makout Ka Powèt?, Divalye Akize, Divalye Kondane, Le Droit à la Parole*.

Haiti Films, an enterprise headed by Jacques Arcelin, produced two films: *Haiti Enchainée* in 1975 and *Canne Amère* in 1984.

DuchVil Productions, another Haitian filmmaking company, has released three motion pictures: *L'ennemi* (1980), *Carline* (1983), *Double Destinée*.

Willy Exumé is a Haitian filmmaker who runs his own company entitled *Wilèk Fim*. He has many films to his credit including:

Olivye (1981)
L'Académie Haitienne (1982)
Nou Tout Se Refijye (1983)
Lavi Ayisyen nan Nouyòk (1984)
Demen Rekòt la Va Bèl
Demokrasi ou Lanmò I
Demokrasi ou Lanmò II
Kouche pa Bay

Here are some other movies produced by Haitians:

Haitian Corner (Raoul Peck)
La Mort du Prophète (Raoul Peck)
L'Homme sur le Quai (Raoul Peck)[1]
Les Gens de Bien (Ronald Delerme)
Tilòm Aletranje (Fayolle Jean)
Le Rancunier (G. Altidor)

There are many other movies that foreigners have made about Haiti. Here are some of them:

Gouverneurs de la Rosée (Maurice Felvic)
Si m pa Rele (Umberto Solas)
Haitian Song (Karen Kramer)
Legacy of the Spirits (Karen Kramer)
Monologue Nord-Sud
Black Dawn
Haiti: the Struggle Continues (Pax Christi USA)
Haiti: Waters of Sorrow (Jacques Cousteau and the Cousteau Society)
Haiti: A Forgotten Nation (Lutheran World Federation)
The Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti (Mystic Fire Voodoo)
Killing the Dream (Jonathan Demme)
Dreams of Democracy (Jonathan Demme)
The Art of Haiti (Mark Mamalakis)
Black Sugar (Indiana University Audio visual Center)
Grande Saline (Indiana University Audio Visual Center)
The Comedians

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[1] This film was shown at the Cannes Film Festival in France in 1993.

RELIGION IN HAITI

The people who were living on the island of Quisqueya at the time Columbus arrived in America in 1492 called themselves *Tainos* and *Caribs*. They used to worship the sun, the moon, the stars, and animals. They called their God *Zemès*. Some time after Christopher Columbus' invasion of the island, most of the Indians died of illness an hard labor. As a result, the colonists decided to send for blacks from Africa to work as slaves in Saint-Domingue.

While the Africans had to leave their freedom behind in order to work as slaves on the plantations, they did not abandon their culture. When the masters arrived in Saint-Domingue with the slaves, they split them up in such a way that members of the same tribe were not allowed to live in the same area. In spite of that, the slaves managed to preserve their mores, customs, and beliefs. During colonial times the masters did not take too kindly to priests preaching the gospel to the slaves as they did not feel that these words were suitable for their ears. In 1764, the colonists expelled some Jesuit priests for doing just that. This made it somewhat easier for the slaves to hold on to their beliefs.

Toussaint Louverture's constitution of May 1801 allowed for freedom of worship even though it recognized Catholicism as the only official religion of Haiti. On the other hand, Dessalines' constitution (1805) did not recognize an official religion; instead, it provided for the separation of church and state. As a result, the Vatican blacklisted Haiti for twenty-five years. It did not allow any priests to go to Haiti. In the meantime, voodoo was making its way into the country's culture. It picked up some beliefs and rituals from Catholicism. For example, voodooists use icons of many Catholic saints even though they give them different names. By the time president Géffrard signed the *concordat* with the Vatican, it was too late for the Catholic church. The voodoo religion had already taken root in the culture of the Haitian people. They could no longer eradicate it even though they tried unsuccessfully through various *rejete*[1] campaigns (1896, 1913, 1940).

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[1] Creole name given to the various campaigns designed to eradicate voodoo.

In 1918, a seminary was opened in Haiti. In 1930, there were 205 Roman Catholic priests in Haiti; only 8 of them were Haitians. In 1960, there were 300 priests; 80 of them were Haitians. Monseigneur Augustin was the first Haitian bishop; he was consecrated in 1953.

There are a good number of schools in Haiti that are run by priests and nuns. The church in Haiti owns property, land, and money. It exerts a great deal of control over the Haitian educational system.

In addition to voodoo and Catholicism, there are many Protestant sects operating in Haiti, namely, Baptist, Adventist, Pentecostal Jehova's Witnesses, Mormon, Moonies. Haitians love to say: "We are 90% Catholic, 100% voodooist". That's the truth.

HOLIDAYS CELEBRATED IN HAITI

January 1st - Independence Day

It's a tradition for many people in Haiti to eat squash soup on that day. Women wear polka dot dresses to wish for money. Godchildren visit their godparents to wish them a *"Happy New Year"*, hoping they will receive a present.

January 2nd - Memorial Day

This day is set aside to honor the memories of Haitian ancestors and heroes. Families get together. The president addresses the nation.

January 6th - The Three Kings Day

Both masses and voodoo ceremonies are offered.

January 21st - Virgin Mother of Grace Day

Roman Catholics attend mass - many people go on a pilgrimage.

February 7th - Haiti's new independence

Haitians began celebrating this holiday in 1987, one year after Jean-Claude Duvalier left the country and went into exile.

February 14 - St. Valentine's Day

It is called *"Lovers Day"*. Many women wear pink.

February - Carnival/Mardi gras

Carnival practice begins on the second Sunday of January. Carnival ends with the three *gras* days: *Dimanche Gras, Lundi Gras* and *Mardi Gras* in February. *Rara* begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. *Rara* is a musical group and their followers dance in the streets. They come primarily from rural areas and use home-made instruments such as *banbou, vaksin*, etc.

March 8th - International Women's Day

March 17th - St. Patrick's Day (*Danmbala's*[1] Day)

March 27th - International Theater Day

March 29th - Day on which the latest Haitian constitution was approved by the Haitian people in 1987.

March/April - Easter Sunday

Roman Catholics attend mass. During Lent, the statues of the saints are covered with a purple cloth. They are uncovered on the eve of Easter Sunday. The faithfuls pray and fast beginning on Ash Wednesday and ending on Easter Sunday. On Holy Thursday, there is the ritual of the washing of the feet. On Good Friday, they have processions and the stations of the cross.

April 7th - Health Day. The anniversary of Toussaint Louverture's death.

April 14th - Pan-American Day

May 1st - Agriculture Day/Labor Day

On this occasion, agronomists plant trees and peasants have big feasts.

May 18th - Flag Day/University Day

Dessalines and Pétion created the Haitian flag during a congress with officers of the indigenous army in *Arcahaie* on May 18, 1803. The first Haitian flag was red and blue. The blue was closer to the flag's pole. Thereafter, different Haitian governments made various changes in the flag, either in the color (black instead of red) or in the layout of the colors (vertical instead of horizontal). As of February 1986, the Haitian flag is red and blue, and the colors are arranged horizontally: blue on top, red at the bottom. The motto of Haiti is, *In unity there is strength*. Catherine Flon is credited with sewing the first Haitian flag.

May 19th - Ascension Day

The anniversary of the death of Benoit Batraville, a Haitian who led the *Cacos* in their fight against the American occupation of Haiti.

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[1] *Danmbala* is a voodoo god that is represented by a white snake.

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Last Sunday of May - Mother's Day

Everybody celebrates Mother's Day. Those whose mothers are still alive wear a red corsage. Those whose mothers have passed away wear a white or purple corsage.

June 7th - Haitian Press Day

June 13th - Feast of St. Anthony of Padua. Feast of *Legba*[1]

June 14th - Corpus Christi

June 24th - The Feast of St. John the Baptist

It's a regional feast. St. John the Baptist is the patron of the freemasons.

June - Father's Day

It falls on the second Sunday in June.

July 16th - The Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (Our Lady of Miracles) - Feast of *Èzili Dantò*[2]

Roman Catholics have processions and they attend mass. Many people go on a pilgrimage in *Ville Boheur (Saut d'Eau)*

July 25th - The Feast of St. John the Major

Roman Catholics attend mass. Voodooists celebrate *Ogou Feray*, the god of war.

July 27th - The Feast of St. Anne and St. Joachim

It's a regional feast in *Anse-à-Veau*.

August 7th

On August 7, 1934, president Sténio Vincent celebrated the end of the American occupation of Haiti; the occupation began in July 1915. The American flag was lowered on August 15, 1934. President Roosevelt visited Haiti in July 1934. He signed a contract for the American troops to leave the country.

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[1] Voodoo god.

[2] Voodoo goddess.

August 12th - The Feast of St. Claire

This feast is celebrated in Marchand Dessalines.

August 14th - Ceremony of Bois-Caïman (1789)

August 15th - The Feast of Ascension - The Feast of Notre Dame

Both masses and voodoo ceremonies are offered.

August 25th - The Feast of St. Louis

It's a regional feast in *Jérémie* and *Saint-Louis-du-Sud*.

August 31st - Anniversary of the death of Charlemagne Péralte

September 15th - Our Lady of Sorrows

September 30th - The Feast of St. Jérôme

October 17th - The anniversary of the death of Jean-Jacques Dessalines

October 24th - United Nations Day

November 1st - All Souls Day/ *Gede*

Roman Catholics attend mass. Voodoo believers celebrate *Gede*. *Gede* dresses all in black with a white belt. He is the master of the dead.

November 2nd - All Saints' Day

Roman Catholics attend mass.

November 4th - The regional feast of St. Charles in Gonaïves.

November 18th - The Battle of Vertières, Army Day

This is the anniversary of the decisive battle the slaves in Saint-Domingue led against the French army during the war of independence.

December 5th - Anniversary of Christopher Colombus' landing on the island of Haiti

December 8th - The Feast of Our Lady of Refuge

Many people go on a pilgrimage. They dress in white and blue. Children who were born on that day wear the same colors.

December 24th - Christmas Eve

Roman Catholics attend midnight mass. Some families have a big feast called *reveyon*. Protestants celebrate Jesus' birthday. Many people give big parties in their homes with plenty of food, drinks, music, dancing, etc.

Voodoo believers celebrate at midnight. They put on a beautiful ceremony in honor of the voodoo gods.

December 25th - Christmas Day

The Catholic church offers beautiful masses on that day. In some families, children receive presents from Santa Claus (*Tonton Nwèl*).

December 31st - The last day of the year, the day before New Year's Day.

There are parties all over the place. People have parties in their homes. Some people go to church for midnight mass in order to thank God for the year that has just passed. Voodoo believers get ready for New Year's Day. They call on the spirits to make special requests for the coming year.

SQUASH SOUP: A NEW YEAR'S DAY TRADITION

By Ménès Déjoie

As a child growing up in Haiti, I remember always having squash soup on New Year's Day. In order to keep the tradition alive, I make squash soup for my children every January first.

As a child, I remember always racking my brain trying to figure out where this tradition came from. I searched in all my school books, but I could not find an answer. I asked my mother; she did not know. I asked my father; he said I was too curious. Every adult I asked was always too rushed or too busy to answer me, or they simply did not know.

One time, I went on vacation at my grandmother's in the countryside. Grandma really loved me. She would take me swimming in the river. She would let me pick mangoes. She would help me set traps for birds. She would play *kay*[1] with me. At night, she would tell me stories about *Tezen nan dlo*, *Mariwoz*, etc.

One night, as I was playing *kay* with my grandmother, I asked her: "Grandma, why do we have squash soup on New Year's Day?" This is what she told me: "This tradition began way, way back. When Haiti was called Saint-Domingue, it was a French colony and our ancestors were in slavery. They worked hard on the plantations and they had no rights. They lived in terrible conditions. The masters mistreated them, beat them to make them work. The slaves were not allowed to have squash soup; that dish was reserved for the masters only. This situation of slavery and injustice caused the slaves to revolt and fight for freedom and independence. They put together an army. In November 1803, they were victorious over the French army in *Vertières*. On January 1, 1804, they organized a big ceremony to proclaim the country's independence. There were celebrations happening all over the place. The people and the soldiers celebrated together in all four corners of the country. In order to mark the end of slavery, many people cooked squash soup. And it became a tradition. Every New Year's Day, as Haitians celebrate their country's independence, they make squash soup."

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[1] Typical Haitian game.

When grandma finished telling me the story, I kissed her on both cheeks to show my appreciation. I finally found someone who could tell me why we have squash soup on January first. Ever since that day, I developed a stronger liking for squash soup. I don't know how true grandma's story was, but if my child ever asks me why I make squash soup every January first, I will tell him/her the same story.

HAITIAN HEROES AND HEROINES

ANACAONA (*Anakawona*)

She is one of the first heroines in Haitian history. She and her brother Bohéchio ruled Xaragua, a territory in Quisqueya. Anacaona was the wife of Caonabo, a valiant cacique in Maguana, near Cibao. Anacaona loved literature, poetry, and drama. As a poet, she composed beautiful poems. Her other passions were singing and dancing. She worked hard for the advancement of these art forms. At the same time, she was a fervent practitioner of the Quisqueyan religion. She used to offer sacrifices to her gods.

Anacaona tried to befriend the Spanish. She would organize major celebrations in their honor to help them understand Quisqueyan culture. She wanted to see if the two people could live together in peace on the island. But the Spaniards betrayed her trust. One day, they ambushed and arrested her. Nicolas Ovando, the Spanish governor, had her hanged.

SANITE (SUZANNE) BELAIR (*Sanit Sizàn Belè*)

Sanite Belair was a brave woman, who along with her husband Charles Belair, participated in the battles the slaves of Saint-Domingue fought for their liberation. After Toussaint Louverture was arrested by the French army, Sanite and her husband, who was Tousaint's nephew, stirred up the slaves of *L'Artibonite* to revolt against their masters. Sanite had a group of soldiers under her command. She was not afraid of anything; she was very brave. But after a while, both she and her husband were arrested by the commander of Verettes. They were sent to Cap-Haïtien. After they finished killing her husband, they wanted to cover her eyes before they cut her head. She resisted. Like her husband, she wanted to go in front of a firing squad. Sanite Belair died like a brave soldier.

MARIE-CLAIRE HEUREUSE FELICITÉ BONHEUR (*Mariklè Erez Felisite Bonè*)

According to hearsay, Marie-Claire was born in Léogane. She was married to Jean-Jacques Dessalines. Marie-Claire loved children. As a result, she asked Dessalines to recognize as their own the children he had out of wedlock. During the war of independence, Marie-Claire Felicité Bonheur spent quite a while in Jacmel. She set up a canteen there to feed the soldiers and destitute people.

Marie-Claire asked many women from *Léogane* to come and help her provide medical care to sick and wounded soldiers. She could easily be dubbed "the first nurse of the Haitian independence war". After independence, she saved the lives of many French colonists. It was she who saved the life of Descourtilz. When she became empress, she requested that the state give a subsidy to mothers in order to help them take care of their children.

Marie-Claire lived past a hundred. All her life, she fought for justice and the betterment of poor people's lives.

DEFILEE (*Defile*)

Defilée was born in Cap-Haïtien. During the war of independence, she used to sell food and liquor to the soldiers.

She became insane after her two children and three brothers were killed by the French army. They say she used to visit their tombs all the time. It was when she was living in Port-au-Prince, at the end of 1806, that she became better known as a result of something she did after the death of Dessalines. When Defilée saw a bunch of people mistreating Dessaline's body after they had killed him in Pont Rouje, she did not hesitate to slip through the crowd to pick up his remains. She buried him in a cemetery. This happened on October 17, 1806. Arsène Chevry and Christian Werleigh wrote poems to honor Defilée. Christian Werleigh's poem won a prize on January 6, 1928.

JEAN-JACQUES DESSALINES (*Janjak Desalin*)

Jean-Jacques Dessalines was born in 1758 on the Cormier Plantation in *Grande-Rivière-du-Nord*. He grew up in slavery. Dessalines spent all his life working for freedom and justice.

When Debelle and Rochambeau attacked La Crête-à-Pierrot in March 1802, Dessalines and his troops spent almost three weeks resisting the assault by the French army. After the deportation of Toussaint Louverture, Dessalines became commander of the indigenous army. On May 18, 1803, he organized a congress in *Arcahaie* where he created a flag for the indigenous army. Jean-Jacques Dessalines went all around the country helping to organize the army. He spent time in the North, in the South, in the West and the Northwest. In the Northwest, he named Capois brigadier and commander of *Port-de-Paix*; in the west, he named Pétion major general. In the meantime, the indigenous army was claiming victory wherever it went. The French army was weakening day by day. At the end of October 1803, only *Cap-Haitien* and *Môle Saint-Nicolas* were still under French rule.

In November 1803, Dessalines and his troops decided to march on *Cap-Haïtien*. On November 10, he gave his generals the order to attack. On November 18, the indigenous army defeated Napoléon's army in *Vertières*.

The French handed over the city of *Cap-Haïtien* to Dessalines on November 19, 1803. On December 4, the indigenous army finally won *Môle-Saint-Nicolas* from the French. On January 1, 1804, Dessalines proclaimed Haiti's independence. His lieutenants named him governor-general for life. On October 6, 1804, he was crowned emperor of Haiti.

As a way of rewarding the high-ranking officers who participated in the war of independence, Dessalines gave them a lot of land. But the rest of the population got nothing. For the most part, they were living in poverty. The big landowners made them work for practically nothing. The 1805 constitution gave Dessalines absolute power. In the south, he ordered the peasants not to cut logwood trees. Soldiers were not getting paid. Needless to say, there was some discontent against Dessalines. Gérin, Pétion, Christophe, Magloire, Ambroise, Yayou and Vaval took advantage of this situation to plot the assassination of Dessalines.

In October 1806, they ambushed him at Pont Rouge. It was Yayou and Hilaire Martin who stabbed him. Defilée, an emotionally unstable woman, and Dauphin picked up his remains and buried him in a cemetery.

HENRIETTE de SAINT-MARC (*Anriyèt de Senmak*)

Henriette de Saint-Marc contributed to the war of independence the slaves fought in Saint-Domingue. She would seduce the French soliders in order to obtain information from them to pass along to the indigenous army. She used to make arrangements with the slaves to steal weapons from the French army. But one day, the French caught on to her. David Troy arrested her in *Desprez*, in December 1802. A military tribunal sentenced her to death by hanging. One Saturday morning, she was killed in front of the Cathedral in *Port-au-Prince*. Before she was executed, they made her carry her own casket.

Henriette de Saint-Marc was a brave woman. When asked to say her last words before her death, she hailed: "liberty or death".

MARIE-JEANNE LAMARTINIERE (*Marijàn Lamatinyè*)

Jean-Jacques Dessalines used to remark that in the spy world Marie-Jeanne Lamartinière had no equal. They called her *"1,000 faces"* because nobody could give a true description of her. Some people swear that she was an old lady, others thought she was a mulatto, others still believed that she was a woman of dark complexion. Nobody knew her relatives. She was married to a man named Louis Dor Lamartinière, a soldier in the indigenous army.

Marie-Jeanne played an important role in the battle of *La Crête-à-Pierrot*. History tells us that she, along with other women, danced at *La Crête-à-Pierrot* in order to help route the opposing army. That was instrumental in stirring up the indigenous army. According to hearsay, the indigenous army had few weapons at the eve of this battle. The women disguised themselves as old ladies in order to slip through the French army to steal weapons and ammunition. Marie-Jeanne devoted her life to the struggle; she was bold. She could handle weapons, and she knew how to ride a horse.

TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE (*Tousen Louvèti)*

Toussaint was born in 1743 on All Saint's Day on the Breda plantation. According to some historians, he came from the Arada tribe in Dahomey, Africa. He was the great-grandson of a King they called *Gaou Guinou*. The slave traffickers brought Gaou Guinou Junior (the King's son) to Saint-Domingue. It was the owner of the Breda Plantation near *Cap-Haïtien* who bought him. Toussaint is the son of Gaou Guinou Junior and Pauline.

Toussaint grew up on the Breda plantation. He was a domestic slave. He spent more than forty years in slavery. It was a Jesuit priest who taught him how to read and write. He was so skinny they used to tease him. They called him *Fatra Baton*. But Toussaint was strong. He was a good runner. He could climb trees fast, and he was a good swimmer.

Toussaint loved to ride horses. As a result, he once broke his arm as he fell from a horse. His godfather, who was an herb doctor, tried to fix the arm, but he was not too successful. As an adult, Toussaint had an arm that was twisted around like a hook from a hanger.

In 1789, Toussaint was the coachman for Bayon Libertad. That gave him time to reflect and to read. Toussaint was not happy with his condition, nor that of the other slaves.

After the slave revolt of August 1791, Toussaint wrote a letter to the slaves with the following message: "My name is Toussaint, you don't know me yet, but I ask you to trust in me. We will work together to break the chain". At the time, Toussaint was enrolled in an army of maroon slaves who were fighting against the French colonists.

In 1793, Toussaint joined the Spanish army along with Jean Francois and Biassou. On August 13, 1793, he defeated the French general Desfourneaux in Ennery. Thereafter, the Spanish king named him lieutenant general. On May 18, 1794, Toussaint changed sides. He joined the French army. He defeated the Spanish Army in many places.. He took many cities from them. The French elevated him to brigadier, then to major general. Toussaint was a good organizer. On January 21, 1801, Toussaint entered Santo Domingo. He defeated the Spanish army and declared himself commander-in-chief of the whole island.

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In the same year, Toussaint convened a big assembly. He had them work on a constitution where he was proclaimed governor-general for life. Bonaparte did not like that move. He thought Toussaint wanted to liberate Saint-Domingue from French rule. He quickly sent an army to Saint-Domingue to restore order. Its mission was to reestablish slavery, disarm the slaves, and deport all high ranking officers of the indigenous army.

General Leclerc arrived in Saint-Domingue with 48,000 soldiers. Toussaint gave the order to set fire wherever the French ships appeared. His order was followed to the letter. The French were met with fire wherever they went.

Christophe set fire to his own house in *Cap-Haïtien*; Toussaint set his plantation ablaze. But with the help of some of Toussaint's officers, the French army managed to weaken him. He had to lay down his arms and ask for a truce. He went to live on what was left of his plantation near *Gonaïves*. That's where a French general by the name of Brunet betrayed and arrested him. He was exiled to France on a ship called *Le Héros*. Toussaint died on April 7, 1803 in *Fort de Joux*, a French prison.

LÉON DESIRÉ PARIS (*Leyon Dezire Paris*)

Léon Desiré Paris is a notable aviator. He is the first Haitian pilot, and the first black pilot in the world. He was born in *Petit Goâve*, Haiti at the beginning of the twentieth century. He moved to the United States at a young age. He went to school in Baltimore. He was very intelligent, and obtained his pilot's license. He married a white American woman. They had three children: Leon Junior, Robert and Lucretia. He later divorced his wife. Léon Desiré Paris' dream was to have his own airplane. He saved enough money to buy a plane. He called it *Toussaint Louverture*.

In April 1932, Léon Desiré Paris got in his plane and left New York. He was accompanied by an American pilot named Charleston. They set out for *Port-au-Prince*. They made a stop in Cuba, in the city of Santiago. The Haitian consul there gave him a bouquet of flowers. Then, the pilots left for *Port-au-Prince*.

While Léon was flying above *Port-au-Prince*, many people were waiting for him at the airport. People were looking up, ecstatic at the aerial show he was performing. As he got to the statue of Dessalines, he dropped the bouquet of flowers which fell directly on the statue. People clapped enthusiastically. President Vincent was impressed. Later on, he put Léon Desiré Paris in charge of air traffic in the country. Léon lost his airplane in an accident in *Jérémie*.

Leon was very popular in the thirties. He received an award of honor and merit from Parliament. But he was soon forgotten. He died in a hospital in New York in 1983.

CHARLEMAGNE MASSENA PÉRALTE (*Chalmay Masena Peral*)

Charlemagne Péralte was born in *Hinche* on October 7, 1885. He was the son of a major landowner. He served as an altar boy while attending primary school. He completed his secondary school studies at *Saint Louis de Gonzague*.

He was the brother-in-law of Oreste Zamor. In 1914, he was commander in *Port-de-Paix*, before that he was commander in *Léogane*. When the Americans invaded Haiti in 1915, Charlemagne Péralte refused to give up his post. In January 1918, he was tried by the Americans for his complicity in the attack that was carried out against the military headquarter in *Hinche*. He was condemned to five years of hard labor. On September 3, 1918, while participating in a street cleaning detail in *Cap-Haïtien*, he fled with the soldier who was guarding him. He managed to rally the *Cacos*[1] and spearheaded the movement against the American occupation. He was thirty-three years old. Charlemagne used guerilla warfare against the American soldiers.

The objective of the movement was to liberate the country by throwing out the Americans. The movement began in *Plateau Central*; thereafter it spread to many other parts of the country. When the *Cacos* began to cause some trouble, Colonel Wise, who was in charge of the Gendarmerie d'Haiti, ordered Major J. J. Mead, commander of the northern department, to either arrest or kill Péralte.

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1. Army composed primarily of peasants whose goal was to liberate the country from the American occupation.

It was Captain Heinneken, the commander of *Grande Rivière du Nord*, who had the responsibility to carry out the order. He acted in connivance with Jean-Baptiste Conzé to proceed to arrest Peralte. Charlemagne Péralte never had a clue that Conzé was a spy. On October 30, 1919, Heinneken managed to penetrate Péralte's quarters. He found him sitting near a fire; he shot him twice in the heart. Peralte was buried in Chabet in a cement grave. But after the occupation, the Haitian government gave him a national funeral. Philomé Obin did a beautiful painting to commemorate that event in 1946.

Many Haitians regard Charlemagne Péralte as a symbol of resistance against the American occupation of Haiti.

ACTIVITIES

- Brainstorm with the children on the accomplishments of these heroes/heroines. What would the children do if they were living in those times? Draw comparisons between today's situation and the situation as it existed in the past. Brainstorm with them on how they can participate in the changes taking place in Haiti today.
- Have the children make rag dolls or masks to represent these brave people. They can use these dolls or masks to dramatize the lives of these men and women.
- Help the children draw a mural that depicts the time when these men and women were living.
- Have the children do research on famous people either alive or dead. Who are/were they? What have they accomplished, etc? Have them write biographies of these people.
- Have the children write plays/skits about these heroines. These plays/skits should be presented during the month of March, which is International Women's Month.
- Have the children look for pictures, magazine articles about different women. Have them look for newspapers and advertisements that show women in both traditional and nontraditional roles. Have them make a mural that shows the pictures and the accomplishments of these women.

- Using construction paper, make a quilt with the children. Have them cut the paper in squares and have them paste on the squares pictures that show different periods in the lives of famous Haitian men and women.

- Help the children prepare questions they would like to ask their aunts, mothers, cousins, and other women they know. Arrange the questions by themes to facilitate the children's interviews with these women (avoid yes or no questions). Use the interviews to find out what is the same and what is different in the lives of women.

- Discuss the following Haitian proverbs and their meanings with the children. Ask them to write other positive proverbs about women.
  - A woman's pain is for all women to bear.
  - A home without a woman is a home without life.
  - Women are like fallen breadnuts.
  - The misfortune you wish your mother-in-law often happens to your own mother.

- Ask the students to do research on other Haitian heroes.

- Brainstorm with the children on Charlemagne Péralte and the *Cacos*.

- Have the children write a letter to the Haitian president asking him to have Charlemagne Péralte's birthday made into a national holiday.

- Have the children compare Toussaint Louverture and Martin Luther King. How are they similar? How are they different? Have these two people realized their dreams?

- Help the children write a play/skit on the life of a hero or heroine.

HAITIAN GAMES

Haitian children like all other children love to play. Some Haitian games involve competition while others do not. The children enjoy both equally. Whenever one goes to Haiti, he/she will find groups of children playing games.

Many games help children learn the parts of the body. The hands and feet play an important role in games such as *Zonbimannmannan, Zonyon Yo, Kay, Titato.*

Zonbimannmannan is a competitive, active game. *Zonyon Yo* is non-competitive, yet lively. It requires a lot of movements. *Kay* is a competitive game that can be used to reinforce mathematical skills. *Titato* is a mathematical game which requires planning and concentration.

Zonbimannmannan

This is a game that can be played with as many children as possible. They form a circle while holding each other's hands. There is one child in the center representing a little *chicken*. Outside the circle there is a child running around trying to catch the *chicken*.

The person outside cannot come in the circle. He/she must try to catch the *chicken* while he/she is moving in and out of the circle. The *chicken* can move in and out of the circle, but has to make sure he/she is not caught.

While playing the game, the children sing this song:

"Zonbimannmannan
Wi wa, kenbe ti poulèt
Wi wa, ti poulèt sove
Wi wa, kenbe li pou mwen
Wi wa, madan wa malad
Wi wa, pran l, pran l
Wi wa."

They keep singing this song over and over. As they sing, the child in the center keeps moving in and out of the circle. He has to be careful not to be touched by the child who is outside the circle. This game is very lively; the children love playing it. The singing stops when the *chicken* is caught. Then the one who was outside is now the *chicken*, and a new child is chosen to run after the *chicken*.

Zonyon Yo

Any number of children can play this game. They form a circle holding hands with the person next to them. Before starting, they must decide who they are going to call first. While the circle is going around, they call each child twice. The first time he/she will be asked to turn around; the second time he/she will be asked to face forward. While playing the game, the children will sing this song:

"Zonyon yo, zonyon yo
Koute bon mache
Fè sesi, fè sela
Manmzèl Mari
Fè mwen wè do ou."

Mary turns around. The children continue to sing and to go around in a circle. After a while, Mary will say...

Mesye Wobè fè mwen wè do ou.

The game continues like this until everyone has been asked to turn around. In the second part of the game, everyone is asked to face forward.

The game is played as follows:

Players need two rows of 6 circles drawn on the floor or a board. They place 4 pebbles or beans in each circle (48 total). The first player must start on the row that is on his/her side. The player takes 4 beans from one of the circles and moves to the right, putting one bean in the first, second and third circle. When he/she gets to the fourth circle, instead of putting down a bean, the player picks up the 4 beans and now has 5 beans. The player repeats the action of putting down a bean in the next 4 circles. When the fifth circle is reached, the player keeps that last bean and picks up 4 beans. The game continues until the player gets to an empty circle and puts the bean left in his/her hand in the empty circle. Then the next player takes a turn, following the same rules.

The number of circles a player may use in one turn depends on which circle the player starts with. As the game goes on, the circles will have different numbers of beans from 0 to 10. Beans are collected when a player gets to a circle with 3 beans and adds only 1 bean in the circle. He/she then picks up these four beans and puts them down in a pile on his/her side. When all the circles have been emptied, the player who has collected the most beans wins.

HAITIAN DANCES

Haitians dance at all types of occasions: weddings, baptisms, funerals, patron saint feasts, voodoo ceremonies. Most of these dances have their roots in Africa. Most of them are voodoo dances, but some of them have been influenced by European and Native American dances.

There are many voodoo dances, each with its own character, meaning and choreography. Each dance has a rhythm and song(s) that go along with it.

Voodoo dances are divided into several families:
- a. The Dahomey or voodoo family
- b. The Petro family
- c. The Congo family
- d. The Martinique family

Not all the voodoo dances fall into these four families. Dances like *rara, maskawon, kalinda*, do not.

Yanvalou

This dance belongs to the Dahomey family. It is called the dance of the snake. It is performed in ceremonies honoring *Danmbala* who is the snake god. It is also used to worship *Mèt Agwe*, who is the master of the sea. People performing this dance imitate the movement of the ocean waves or the undulation of a snake.

Congo

This dance takes its name from the *Congo* tribe in Africa. It symbolizes love and beauty. It is performed in honor of *Ezili*.

Nago

This dance comes from the same family as *yanvalou*. It shares its name with a tribe in West Africa. It is a war dance performed in honor of *Ogou*.

Petro

Some people believe that this dance was named after a voodoo priest by the name of *Don Pedro*. No one is sure of the origin of that dance. It appears that it was created during colonial time by the slaves. The *Petro* god can be quite mean. It loves the color red.

Djouba Matinik

This dance belongs to the Martinique family. It is performed in honor of *Papa Zaka*, the protector of the peasant. This dance illustrates the elegance of the peasant in general and the capricious nature of the female peasant.

Rara

Rara is a festive dance bearing little resemblance to the other dances. The word *rara* comes from the Yoruba language. This dance existed since colonial times. During Lent, the plantation slaves would put on costumes in order to celebrate. They would play drums; they would dance. One of them would carry a basket in order to collect money. This basket was decorated with beautiful ribbons. They would hang it on a piece of bamboo. When the celebrations ended at midnight, they would salute the plantation owner. One of them would make a speech. After that, the plantation owner was required to put some money in the basket.

The *rara* tradition exists in Haitian culture to this day. Beginning with Ash Wednesday and ending on Easter morning, various *rara* groups gather in the mountains from 7:00 P.M. until dawn. Each of these groups is headed by three people, all playing *banbou*, an instrument made of a piece of bamboo tree. In order to light their way, members of the group carry big candles and locally made kerosene lamps. They march through the town, dancing and singing. Upon reaching the house of an important family, they stop to salute them. They get food or money in return.

The *rara* groups are well organized. Each one has a colonel also named *wa lwalwadi* and one or two baton twirlers. The colonel is in charge of everything. He is responsible for the itinerary and money matters for the group. His important role makes him one of the leaders. He has to bless every intersection the group is going to cross. He is dressed all in red including his hat. The owner of the group is referred to as *president*. The baton twirler has to be very skillful. He has to be able to twirl the baton, to throw it up in the air in any way without letting it drop to the ground. He is supposedly blessed with supernatural powers that allow him to twirl the baton with precision. In general, he is a voodoo priest, an herb doctor, who is very influential in his community. He directs the group according to what the colonel tells him to do. His clothes are made of straw, and they are very colorful.

Rara groups are quite powerful. They do not let anyone join in. If a person comes into the group, he/she has to be willing to pay the consequences. The members of the *rara* group must have a profound knowledge of black magic. The colonel must possess a great deal of power. He is the one who has to bless each intersection the group is about to cross with his whip. He has a whistle that he uses to let the group know when to stop.

Rara is a means of communication for its members. The people use *rara* to relate what is happening in the community, to protest against injustice, to denounce underhanded politicians, to express their opinion about the political situation of the country. *Tanbou* is the most widely used instrument in *rara*.

HAITIAN PROVERBS

According to most Haitians, a proverb is not a simple matter, an ordinary phrase or expression. They see a proverb as a group of words expressing a figurative, sometimes double meaning. To them, a proverb is a true statement; it's an eternal principle to live by. It's a heritage their ancestors left them; it's a legacy they will pass along to their children.

Haitian proverbs can give us an idea of the Haitian people's philosophy, their way of thinking, the way they see life, death, nature, love, friendship, men, women, interpersonal relations, etc. There are proverbs with similar or opposite meanings.

Haitians use proverbs to support an argument, to bring it to a higher level. If a person can find an appropriate proverb to bolster a viewpoint, his/her statement becomes more convincing because, according to most Haitians, proverbs don't lie. Haitians like it when public officials use proverbs in their speeches. They like it even more when foreigners try to use them.

While raising their children, Haitians use proverbs to lecture them, to give them a good moral foundation. They use them to warn children about danger. In a conversation among adults, one of them may invoke a proverb to support his/her viewpoint in the same way that a lawyer would quote a law in the civil code, a Christian a verse from the Bible, or a mathematician a mathematical formula.

The majority of Haitian proverbs contain figurative language, double meanings, imagery, comparisons that can easily capture one's attention. In many proverbs, Haitians transpose a situation that applies to nature or animal life and apply it to human situations and experiences.

It is interesting to study proverbs, to reflect on their meanings. We can criticize them, we can look for their opposites. Proverbs can impart good moral principles. At the same time, they can express negative ideas that hold people back in their struggle for change. Proverbs can help us adapt to a bad situation; they can give us strength; they can give us hope. Some people use proverbs to fool us, to lie to us. Beware! Proverbs are like double-edged swords. As the Haitian saying goes: "The mouth of the wise man may smell, but the words coming out of his mouth do not."

For each proverb, we provide a literal translation and may also give a free translation if necessary to clarify its meaning.

1. ***De mèg pa fri.***
Two lean (things) don't fry.
Two poor people shouldn't get married.

2. ***Dan pouri gen fòs sou bannann mi.***
Rotten teeth have strength over ripe plantains.
The weak take advantage of those who are still weaker.

3. ***Ti dlo, ti dlo w a nwaye.***
A little water, a little water you drown.
Keep it up and you'll pay the consequences.

4. ***Twou manti pa fon.***
The hole of a lie is not deep.
It's easy to see through a lie.

5. ***Kanmarad fè pann.***
Friendship gets you hanged.
It's your friend who hangs you.

6. ***Zanmi ki ede w achte bourik nan tan lapli, pa ede w ba l manje nan tan sèch.***
A friend that helps you buy a donkey in rainy times, does not help you feed it in times of drought.
The friend who helps you in good times may not necessarily help you in bad times.

7. ***Zanmi ki ede w tonbe pa ede w leve.***
The friend that helps you fall down does not help you get up.

8. ***Sa w fè se li ou wè.***
What you do is what you see.
You reap what you sow.

9. ***On jou pou chasè, on jou pou jibye.***
One day for the hunter, one day for the prey.

10. ***Chwal plizyè mèt mouri nan poto.***
The horse with several masters dies at the stake.

11. ***Apre bal tanbou lou.***
After the dance the drum is heavy.

12. ***Koke chapo w kote men w ka rive.***
Hang your hat where your hands can reach it.

13. ***Sak vid pa kanpe.***
An empty sack cannot stand up.
One cannot work on an empty stomach.

14. ***Chak koukouy klere pou je l.***
Each firefly lights its own way.
Everyone for himself/herself.

15. ***Bèt a ke pa janbe dife.***
Animals with tails don't jump over a fire.
The man who has children should refrain from taking too many risks.

16. ***Lè chat pa la, rat bat kalinda.***
When the cat is away, the mice are at play.

17. ***Yo kab fòse bourik janbe dlo, yo pa kab fòse l bwè dlo.***
You can take a donkey to water but you can't force him to drink.

18. ***Fòk ou gen pasyans pou w leve defen solèy.***
You need to have patience in order to raise the dead sun.

19. ***Chemen long pa touye moun.***
A long journey won't kill anybody.

20. ***Baton gonmye miyò pase de men vid.***
(Even) a gum-tree stick is better than two bare hands. (Gum is very soft wood)

21. ***Lè yon chodyè cho, ou pa desann li ak men w.***
When a pot is hot, you don't remove it from the fire using your hands.

22. ***Wòch nan dlo pa konn mizè wòch nan solèy.***
Rocks in the water are not aware of the agonies of rocks in the sun.

23. ***Moun ou konnen lajounen, nan fènwa ou pa bezwen klere chandèl pou rekonèt li.***
The person you know during daytime, you don't have to light a candle to recognize him/her at night.

24. ***Zafè kabrit pa zafè mouton.***
The affairs of goats are of no concern to sheep.
Don't mix things that don't go together.

25. ***Lavi se kòd sapat, ou pa ka konte sou li.***
Life is a sandal's strap, you cannot count on it.
Life is fragile.

HAITIAN RIDDLES

Knock! Knock! Who is there?

1. My father has a tree, it only has leaves.
2. My father built a house on one pole.
3. Little pig with a ball in the belly.
4. As little as it is, it fills the house.
5. Short rifles shoot far.
6. Lefran asks Lefrèn why she was in such a hurry.
7. Layers upon layers without a stitch.
8. An elegant young man who cannot eat soup.
9. Captain behind door.
10. My father has a son, he is always hitting him on the head.
11. Bones over meat.
12. Big belly without intestines.
13. I am born in water, as soon as they put me in water, I die.
14. All dressed up, never goes out.
15. My father has a little horse, he gets taller when he sits down.
16. Build me and I'll let you cross over.
17. I met a boy with a full beard.
18. Under the sea is all blue.
19. On my way to school, everyone is dressed in white. On my way back, everyone is dressed in black.

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20. My father has a horse, he puts the saddle on its back. He rides it on its belly.

21. Round as a ball, long like the open road.

22. Showing teeth 24 hours a day.

23. I climb the tree in the morning and I come down at night.

24. I see a little belt on the ground, I cannot touch it.

25. Everyone makes their bed on firm ground. As for me, I make mine on the ocean.

26. My father has three male donkeys in a field. They can never meet.

ANSWERS

1. Book
2. Mushroom
3. Avocado
4. Lamp
5. Eyes
6. The sun and the moon
7. Onion
8. Fork
9. Broom
10. Nail
11. Lobster
12. Conga Drum
13. Salt
14. Bed
15. Dog
16. Bridge
17. Cotton
18. Indigo dye
19. Mushroom
20. House
21. Ball of yarn
22. Comb
23. Flag
24. Snake
25. Sun
26. Three stones used to support a cooking pot

A HAITIAN FOLKTALE

Bouki, Malis, and Guinea Hen

Knock! Knock!
Who is there?

One day, Uncle Bouki went to Malis' house and saw him cooking guinea hens. He asked Malis to take him to the place where he got the guinea hens. Malis answered: "Uncle, I cannot take you. You are too dumb. You are too greedy. You'll spoil it for me. It would be better if I gave you one guinea hen each day." Bouki said: "Malis, my friend, you have to take me there."

Malis took him to the place. He said to Bouki: "Hide behind this bush. Observe what I do and then do the same thing."

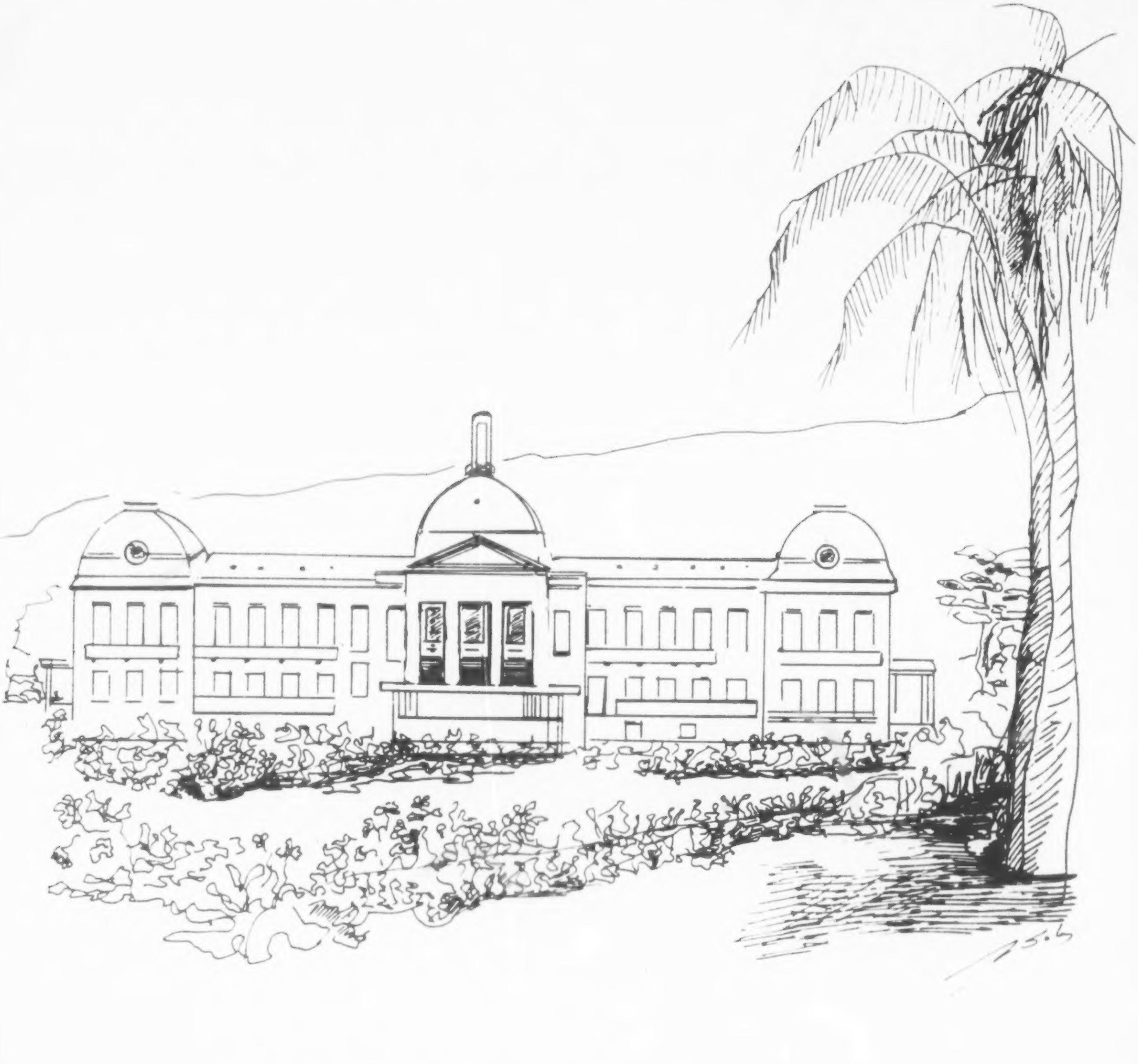
Malis had brought along a conga drum, a cooking pot and a big basket. He began to play the drum and started to sing. All the guinea hens came. They began to sing: "What is the conga drum for, Ti Malis? What is the cooking pot for? What is the basket for? Ti Malis answered with a song: "I bring the conga drum so the guinea hens can dance to its beat. I bring the cooking pot so the guinea hens can drink water from it. I bring the basket to protect the guinea hens from the rain."

As the guinea hens were dancing to their hearts' content, Malis grabbed two or three of them that had come closer to him. He wrung their necks, put them in his basket and left.

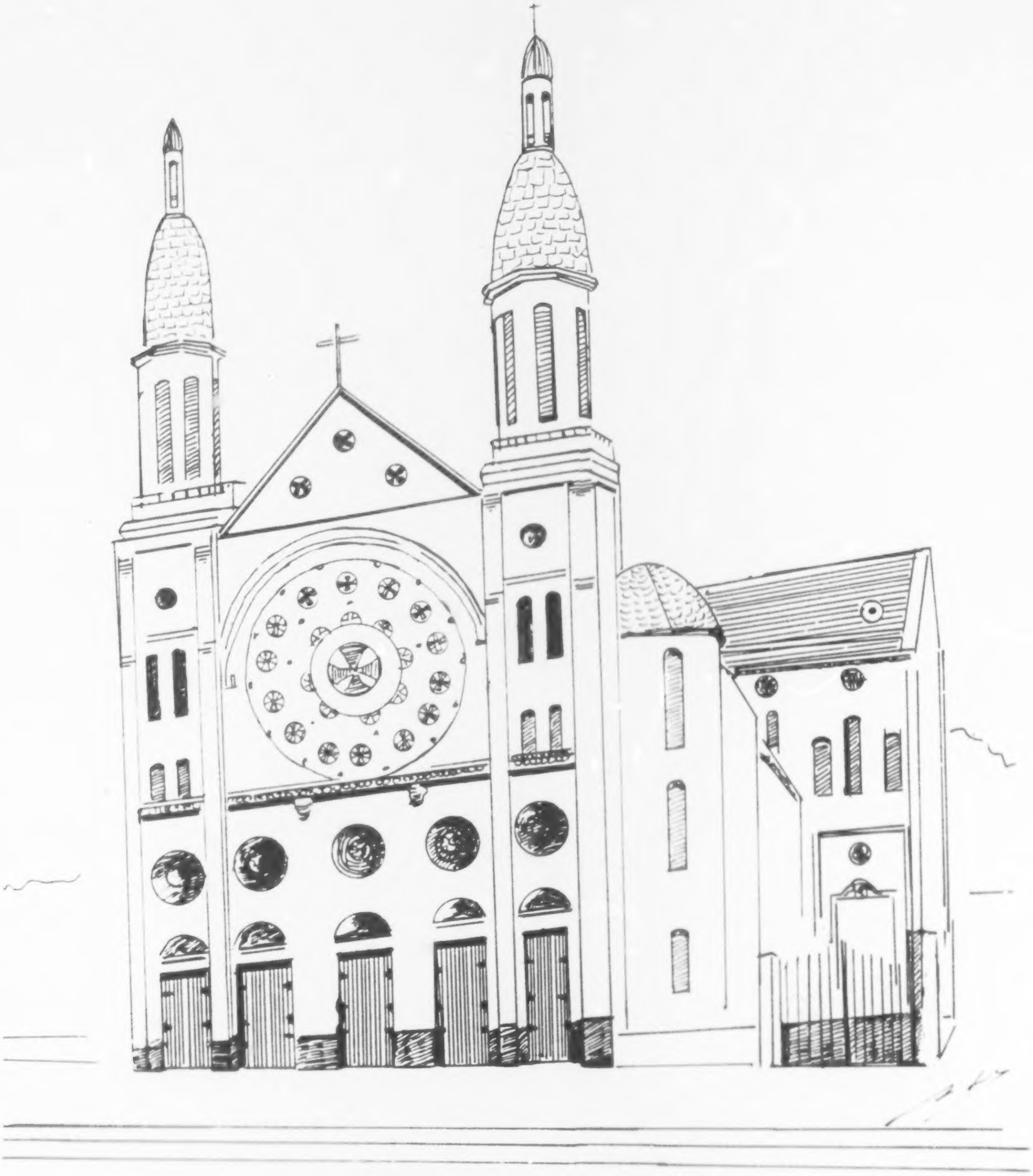
Later on, Bouki came by. He began playing the conga drum. All the guinea hens came. They sang as they wanted to find out what the drum, the cooking pot and the basket were for. Bouki sang and answered them: "I bring my drum in order to catch some guinea hens and eat them."

All the guinea hens flew away.

IMAGES OF HAITI



THE NATIONAL PALACE



THE CATHEDRAL OF PORT-AU-PRINCE

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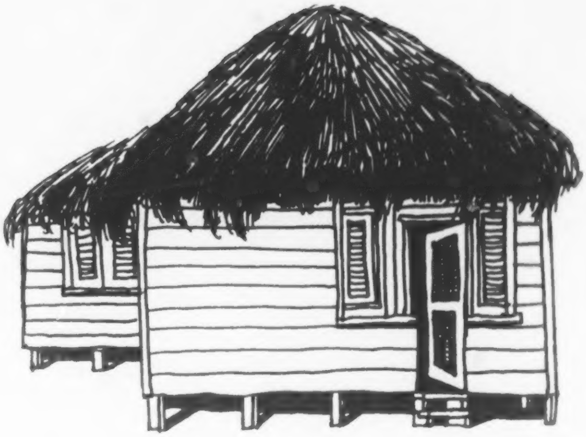

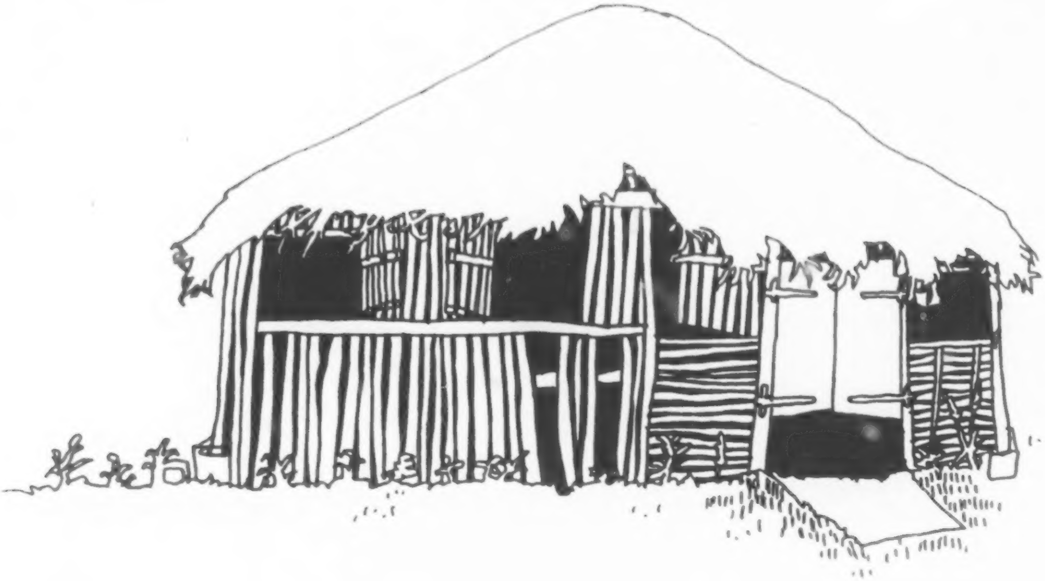

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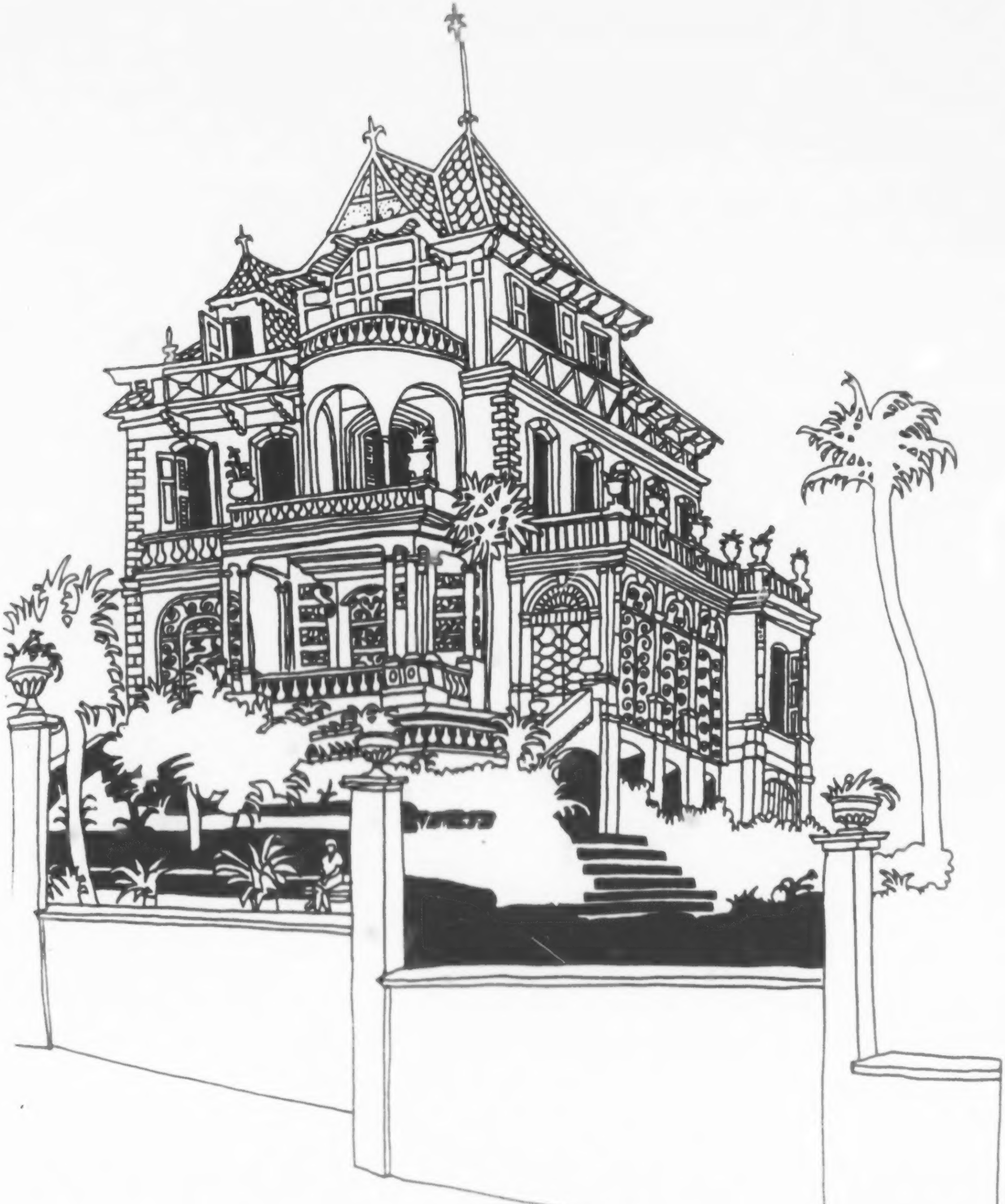
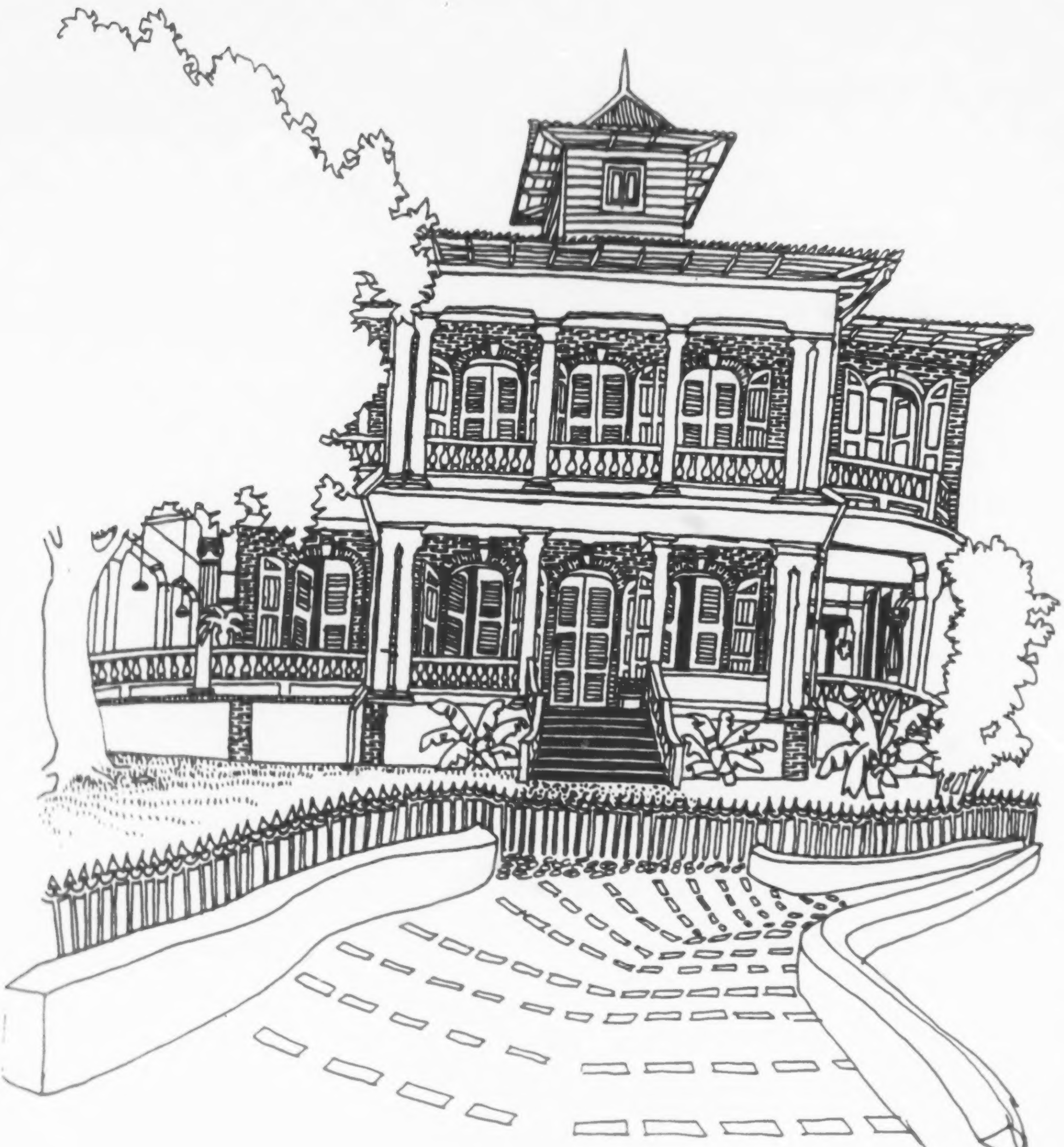
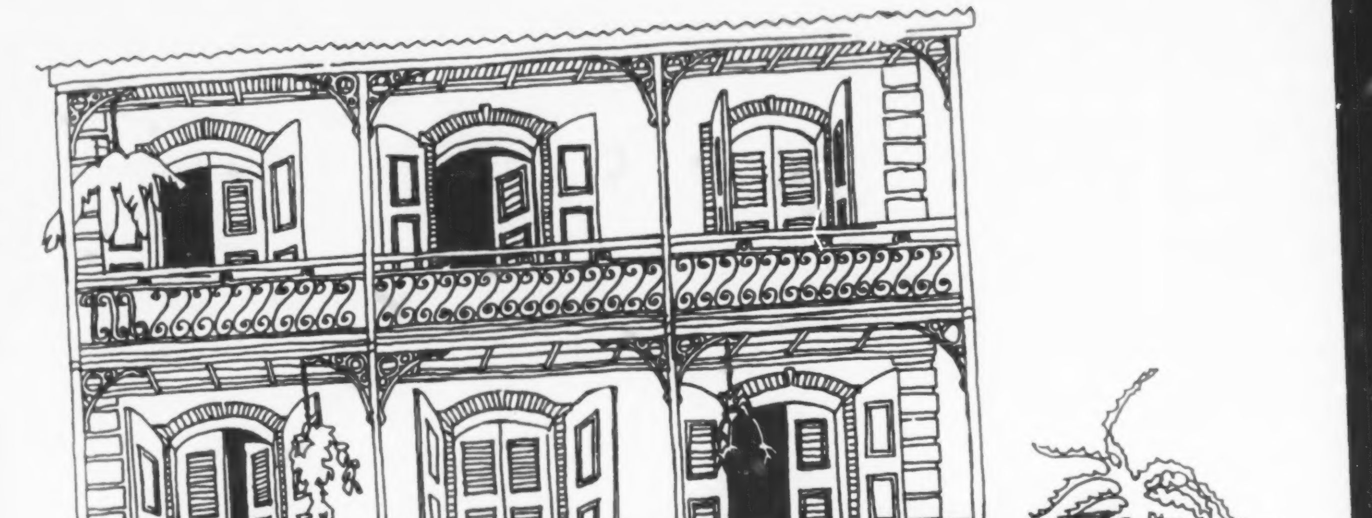


GINGERBREAD HOMES

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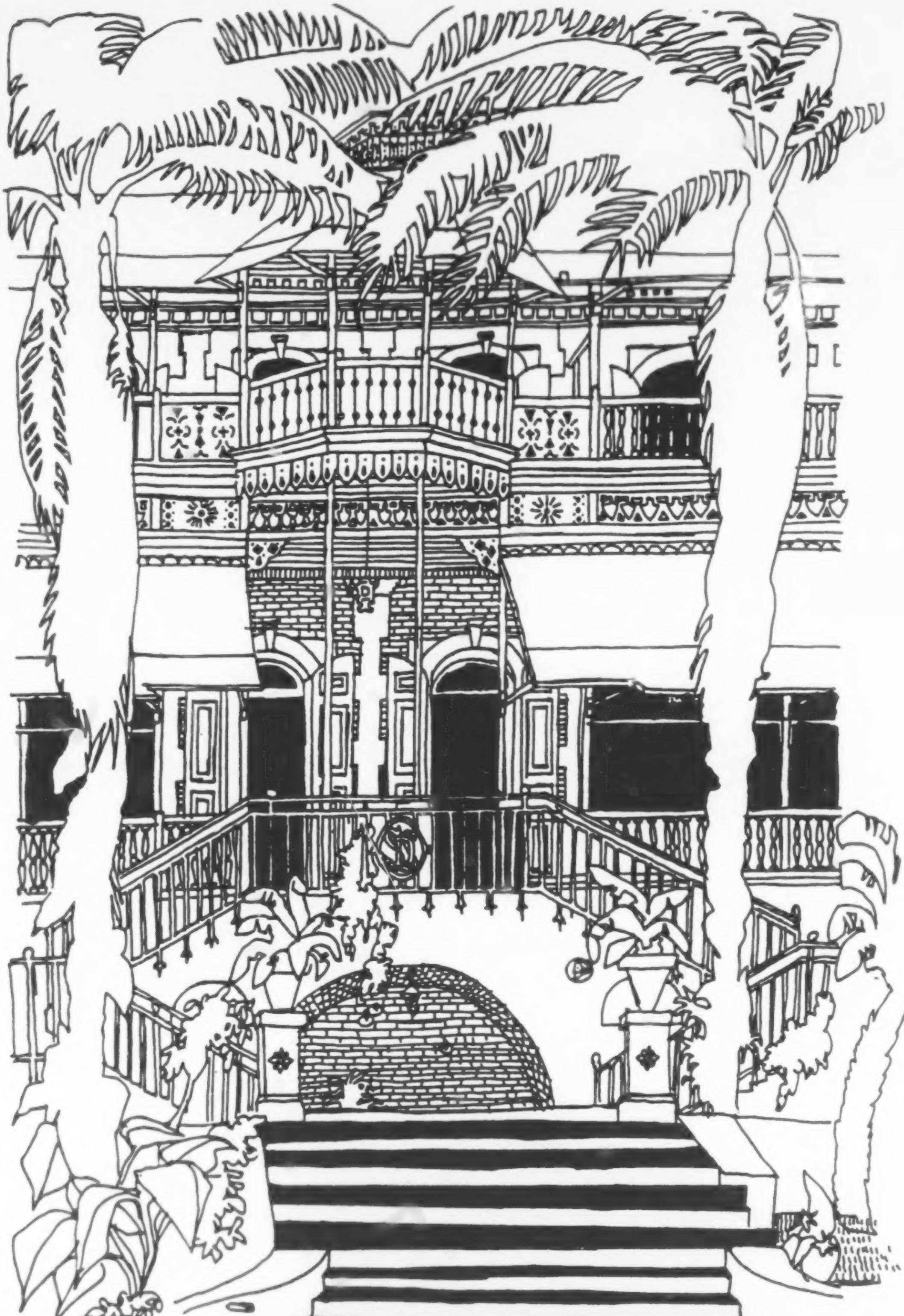

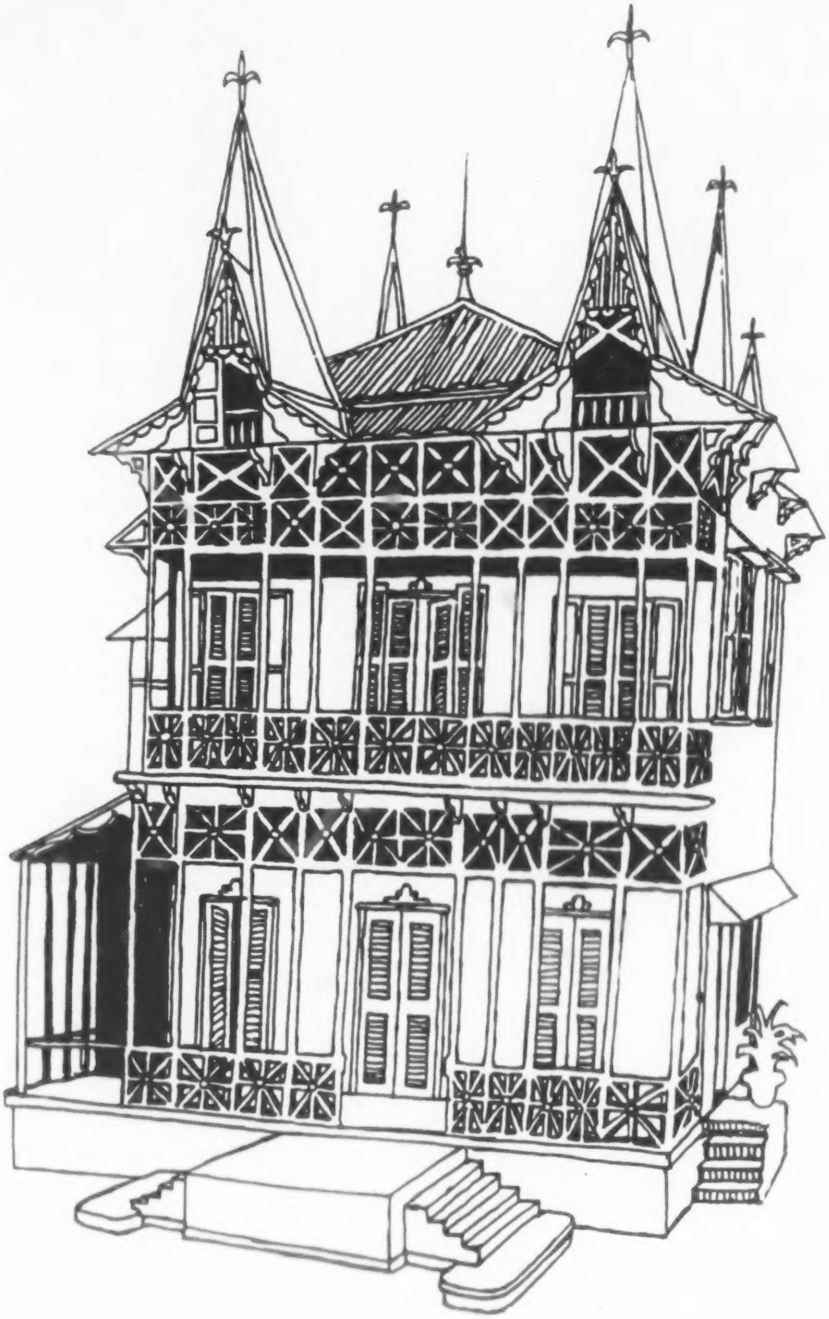

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